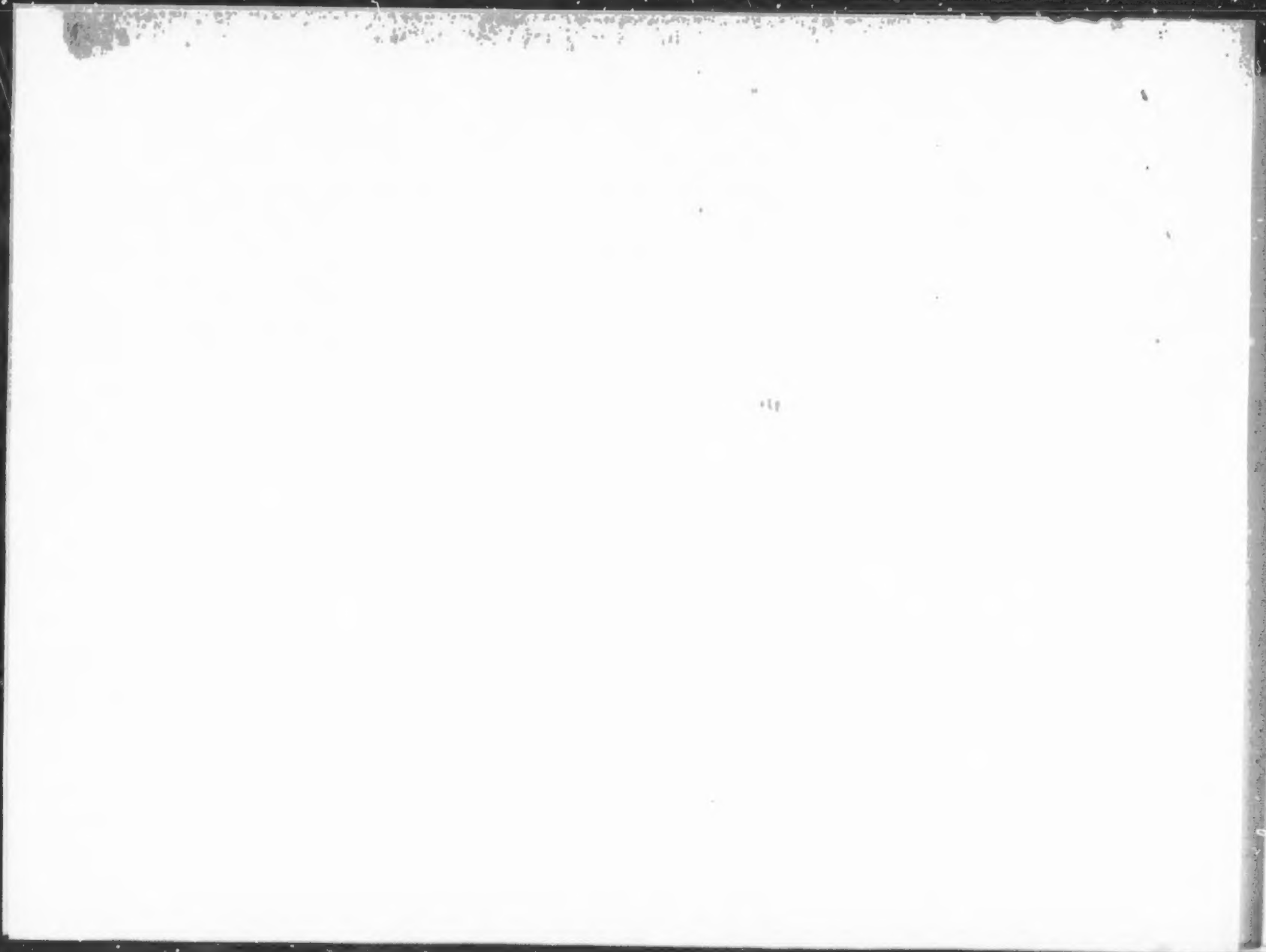




COUNTRY LOVE

AND CITY LIFE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

CHARLES HENRY ST. JOHN



BOSTON

A. WILLIAMS AND COMPANY

1880

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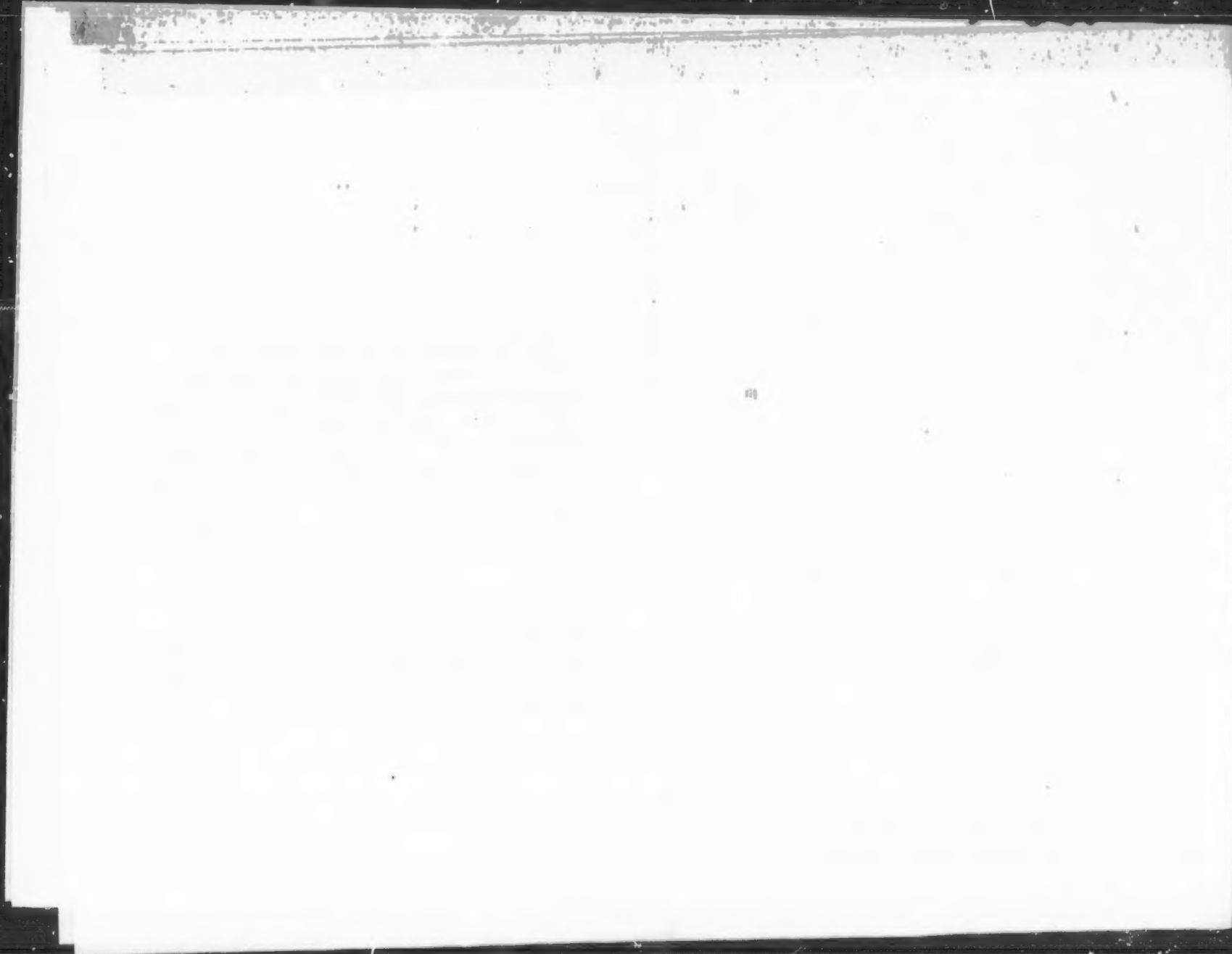
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* * * The contents of this little book is the "survival" of twenty years' scribbling, — the author's last volume having appeared in 1859. The first eighty-six pages, and also from pages 156 to 160 inclusive, are portions of lecture-poems, — chiefly "Country Love and City Life," — which met with a degree of favor on the platform that can hardly be expected in their present attire, being specially designed for public recitation; but as the author has been repeatedly solicited for copies, he now ventures to put them, with other trifles, between the covers of a book. To the many indulgent friends who have materially encouraged the publication of these productions, the author tenders his sincere thanks, and trusts that neither they nor he may be painfully disappointed in the result.



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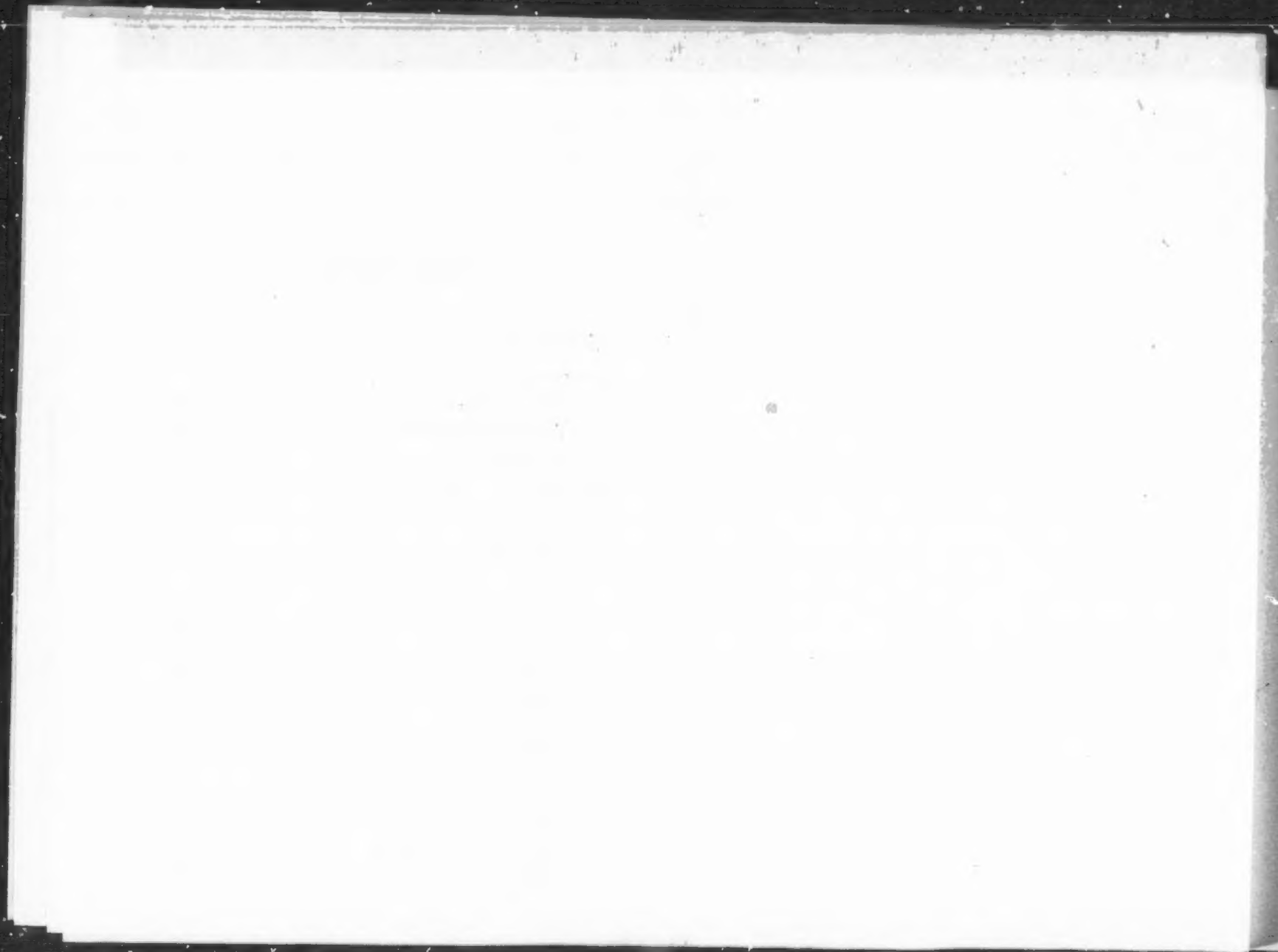
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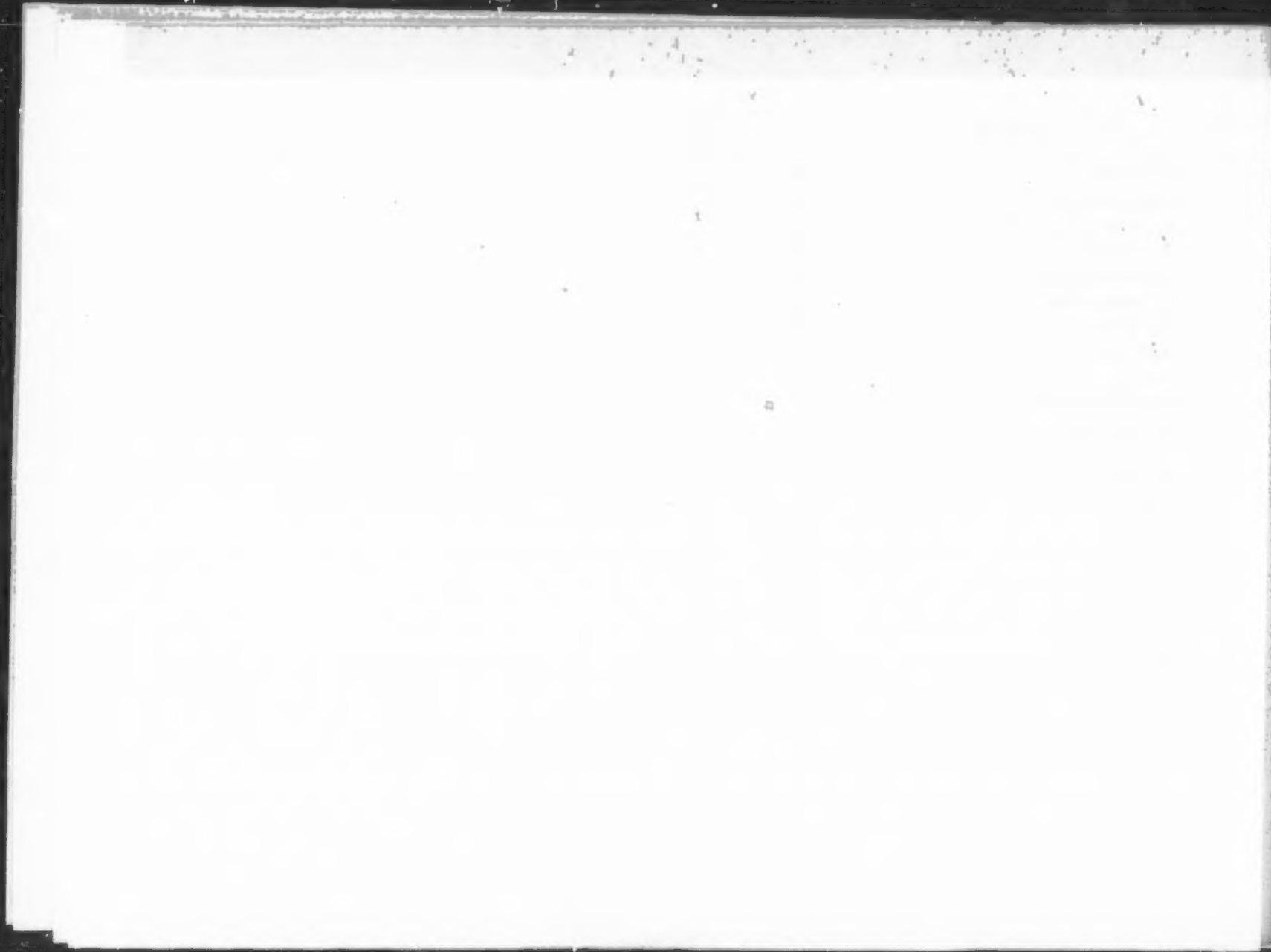
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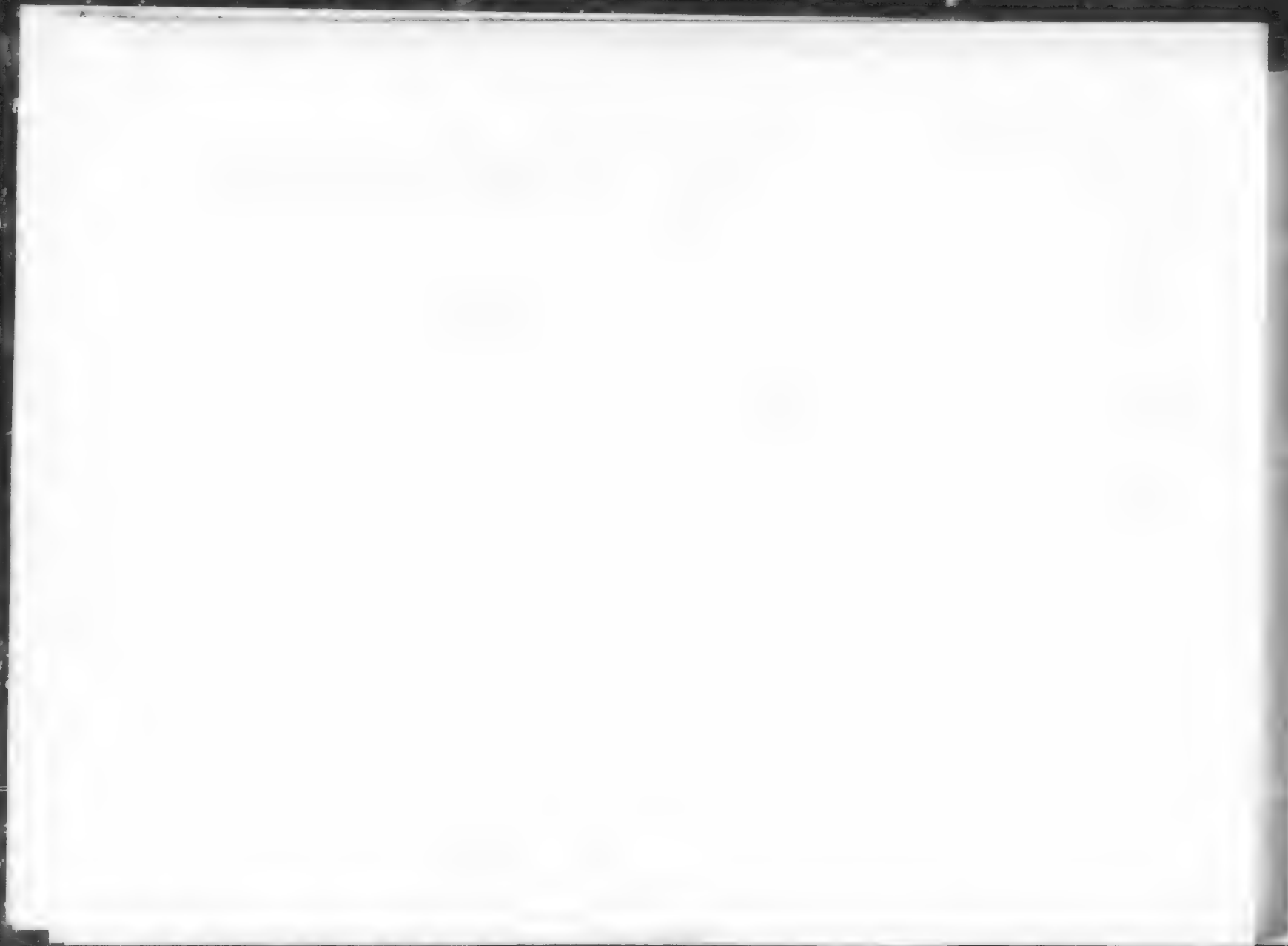


CORPORAL DAY;

OR,

COUNTRY LOVE AND CITY LIFE.

In a beautiful region of valleys and hills,
Of broad-bosom'd meadows and murmuring rills,
Is a fair little village, whose principal street
Is shaded with elms, whose branches meet
Like a gothic aisle, where the heavens are seen
In glimpses of azure through hangings of green.
A spire or two lift their fingers above,
And silently point to the mansions of Love ;
Two or three stores are enough to supply
The people with all they desire to buy ;
While up from the stream, & the foot of the hill,
Comes ever the rumbling roll of the mill.



So far from the track of the world does it lie,
 No fiery engine goes thundering by;
 Not even the nerves of the telegraph reach
 The slumberous brain of the village to teach
 The gossip that keeps all the universe going, —
 Small loss, since at best it is scarcely worth
 knowing!

Two or three newspapers come in the bags
 Of the post, when it comes, that are fingered to
 rags

Ere the next ones arrive with their wonderful lies
 To open the innocent villagers' eyes.
 Such a quiet retreat, where slumber is sweet,
 Is indeed very rarely one's fortune to greet:
 So vastly unlike where the children of fashion
 Invade for the summer to squander their cash in!
 This bright little Eden they never come near:
 In fact, there is naught to inveigle them there;
 No "mineral" humbug for people to drink, —
 Poor broken-down *roues*, who foolishly think
 That three months of water without and within
 Will remedy nine months of folly and sin!
 So with nothing to coax the shoddyfied folks,
 The natives are innocent, guileless, and kind;
 Tho' to saving their pennies some little inclined.

'Tis a dear little, quiet, conservative place,
 Where life is a joy, not a mad steeple-chase:
 Where no one is wealthy, and no one is poor,
 And nobody fastens his window or door,
 And the girls wear the fashion of one year before.
 'Tis a sweet, healthy place; though, perhaps, to
 the crusty,

The street in the summer may seem rather dusty;
 But the water is pure and the meadows are green,
 And, indeed, all the place looks uncommonly
 clean.

A neat little cottage set back from the road
 Some eight or ten steps was the peaceful abode
 Of a fair little maiden called Caroline Gray;
 While over the way lived Absalom Day,
 Whose heart, as they say,
 Was linked to the heart of Caroline Gray.
 At least, to the village 't was very well known;
 For in Blackberry Centre this marvel was true,
 That most people knew
 Much more of their neighbors' affairs than their
 own!

Whatever one did, or said, or tried,
 Somehow or other, was sure to be spied.
 There was n't a man, or woman, or child,



Old or young, sober or wild,
 From the day he was born to the hour he died,
 But was known through all the country-side.
 There was n't a man but could tell to a mill
 The exact amount in his neighbor's till,
 And whether he paid his doctor's bill,
 What insurance was on his life,
 And how much money he gave his wife,
 How much longer ran his lease,
 And just how often he sold his grease !
 So, of course, when such affairs as these
 Were known to all, both great and small,
 The thrilling fact that Caroline Gray
 Encouraged the hopes of Absalom Day
 Was as plain to all the Blackberry people,
 As the gilded vane on the Orthodox steeple !
 In fact, their wedding day was known
 To everyone — but themselves alone !
 But neither cared a single cent
 For all that was said, whatever was meant :
 They went their ways,
 They dreamed their dreams,
 They said their says,
 And schemed their schemes.
 And oh ! such walks

And endless talks,
 O'er breezy hills — by haunted streams !
 What magical castles, sublime and grand,
 They built as they loiter'd hand-in-hand !
 Not all of them airy or based on sand ;
 For thro' the bright tears that blinded their eyes,
 They saw the fair summits of promise rise :
 They saw a church, and before the rail,
 A handsome youth and a maiden pale :
 (The maiden pale was Caroline Gray,
 And the handsome youth was Absalom Day.)
 And they saw a farm in that beautiful land,
 With waving fields on every hand,
 And forests deep, and orchards rare,
 Whose bloom lent fragrance to the air ;
 And a beautiful cottage, where roses twine ;
 And a horse or two, and a couple of kine,
 And ducks and geese, and a fat little hog,
 And a snipperty-snapperty poodle-dog !
 And they dreamt that all these things, you know,
 Belonged to Absalom Day — and Co.
 And furthermore, before the door
 Of the cottage, they saw — well, less than a score,
 Say three little youngsters, with brightest eyes,
 Down in a mud-puddle making pies !

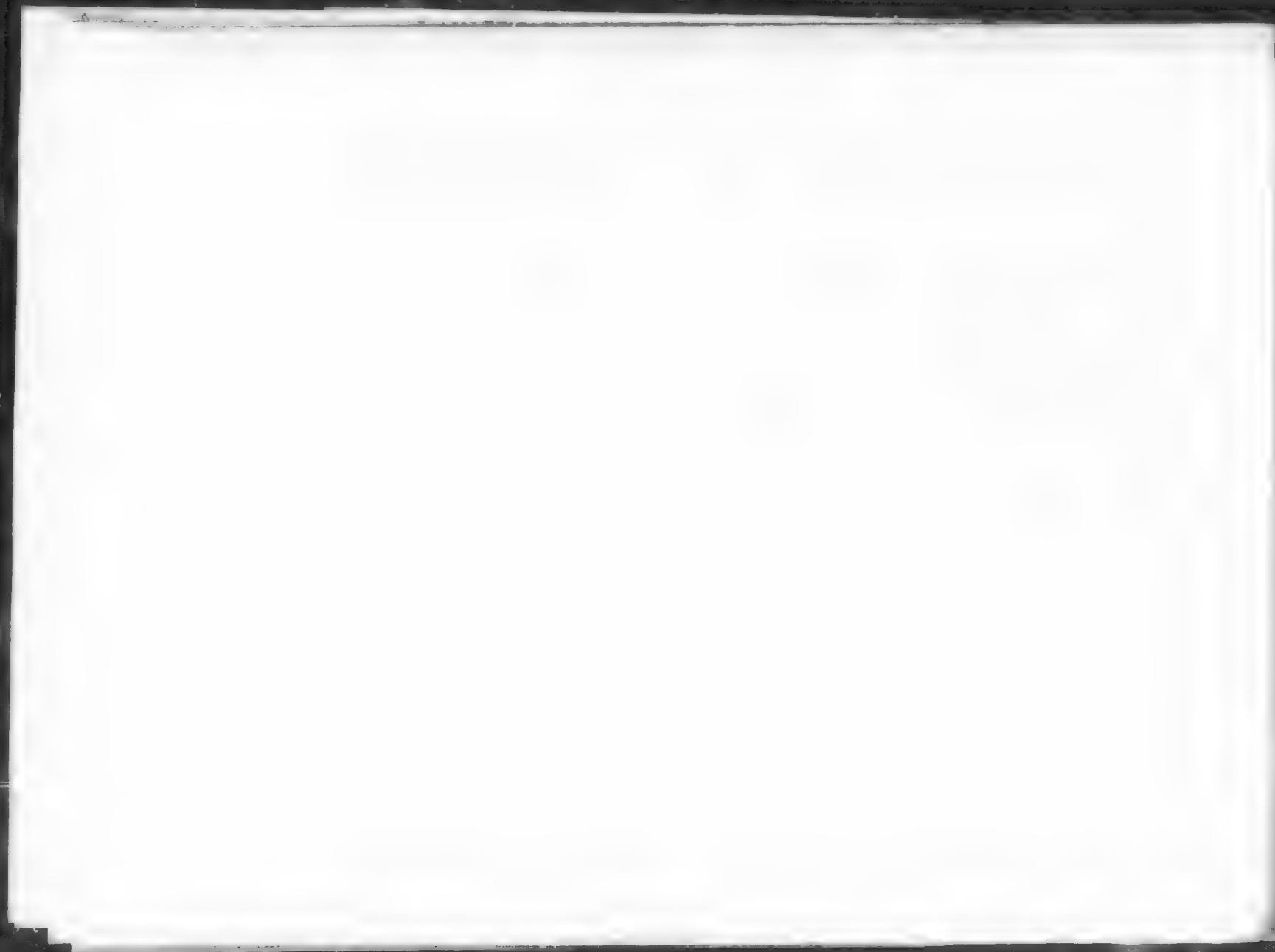


Such the fair vision that dazzled their eyes,
Like Jacob's ladder that reached to the skies !

Ah ! don't we remember the sweet long-ago,
When we, now so solemn, were acting just so !
When down in the fire-light, far on the wane,
We counted those magical castles-in-Spain.
Most wondrous creations ! delightful as dreams
Of Arcadian valleys, and mountains, and streams.
Where naught but enchantment the eyes may
 behold ;
Where the rivulets ripple o'er pebbles of gold ;
Where beauties display their most exquisite
 charms,
And pleasures enfold us in rapturous arms !
No dangers appall us — no sorrows enshroud —
'Neath the burden of labor we never are bow'd ;
Where all we may sigh for we surely shall gain,
No summit so lofty we cannot attain ;
Where honors are strewn like the leaves of the
 grove,
And glories illumine us wherever we rove.
 So real they seem'd,
 We knew not we dream'd ;
We felt not we saw in the embers, that gleam'd

With a glow growing dimmer
Each moment, the shimmer
That fashion'd the fanciful visions of youth ;
 Till Time told the truth ; —
That all these warm tintings were airy and vain ;
 Yet we deem'd Time unjust,
Till we touch'd the pale relics and found they
 were dust !
When we strove to create the fair vision again ,
But vanish'd for aye were our castles-in-Spain !

But let us return to Absalom Day.
His purse was short, but his limbs were long ;
His means were weak, but his arms were strong ;
And everyone knew he scarce could pay
His current expenses, while Caroline Gray
Taught, for years, the village school,
And had a trifle laid away
For a rainy day ;
So everyone said "she *would* be a fool
Tew throw her valoo'ble hand away
On sich a keard es Abs'lum Day !"
But that's what people always say,
When such a miserable, silly thing
As Love puts on the wedding ring.



"Love, indeed! I'd like to know
 If Love can make the old mare go,
 Or fill your pocket, or till your farm,
 Or keep your back in the winter warm,
 Or darn your hose, or save the stitches
 On frocks, and coats, and shirts, and — that?
 If so, I'll certainly set *my* hat."

This is the way you'll mostly find
 The disappointed ease their mind,
 Whose chance is poorer of getting a bid,
 Than finding the treasure of Captain Kidd.

But Absalom very well knew indeed
 What people said; for could n't he read
 The scornful looks that were always cast
 By certain people whene'er they passed,
 With envious mutterings such as this,

(By the meetin'-house door!)

As full of spite as a serpent's hiss:

"And *he* so poor!

But, land! you know

Sich fools will always be doin' so."?

"Oh, yes!" chimes in some ancient maid;

"'Tis a wonder to me she is n't afraid

Of comin' to want; you would n't kitch me!

Oh, no!" —

But then she happen'd to see
 That Absalom caught the words she said,
 And so the tip of her nose grew red,
 Which was all the blushing that came to view,
 As she tries to stammer out, "How d'ye do?"

When Absalom Day,

In reply may say,

"Not much the better, old maid, for you!"

I've nothing to say 'gainst church or steeple,
 Against the pastor or yet the people;
 But this, I think, you'll find the case,
 That there is no more likely place
 For finding out the latest news,
 Than down among the narrow pews.

Now Absalom Day, like a Scottish laird,

Was certainly poor and proud;

But his was a heart that could n't be scared,

And a head that could n't be bowed.

He was only a clerk in the country store;

Where all was sold — and a little more:

Pins and pipes, and tea and nails,

Sugar and ribbon, flannel and pails,

Boots and butter, and tops and tape,

Whiting and blacking, molasses and crape,



Corn and crockery, leather and cheese,
 Syrup for babes and poison for fleas,
 And strings of onions and pens and ink,
 And, out of a demijohn, something to drink !
 Where once inawhile the stage-coach stopp'd,
 And down a hungry mail-bag dropp'd,
 Which Calvin More, who kept the store,
 With dark, mysterious visage bore
 Behind the counter, into a niche,
 Sacred to letters, papers, and "sich."
 While pretty gossips waited without,
 Loudly ribbon'd and lavishly curl'd, —
 Half-expecting and half-in-doubt, —
 Wriggling, giggling, roguish romps,
 Charmingly guiltless of all the pomps,
 If not the vanities of the world.
 'Twas the grand exchange of scandal and news,
 And a wonderful place to cure the blues ;
 For there from morn till nine or ten,
 You'd generally find the leading men, —
 The men who held official station,
 (You'd think, indeed, they ruled the nation !)
 Deacon Dodd, and Father Hobb,
 And queer old Uncle Nathan Cobb,
 Captain Keene, of martial mien,

And the village infidel, Orville Green.
 With lesser lights mixed in between.
 You'd see them all some frosty night
 When snow is crisp and stars are bright,
 As round the red-hot stove they sit,
 And smoke, and chew, and talk, and spit,
 And spin their yarns of this and that,
 From Hobbses' farm to Cobbsses' cat !
 Such was the place where Absalom Day
 Wore the prime of his youth away ;
 Till all-at-once he began to say,
 "This kind of life will never pay !
 I'll toss my bundle upon my back,
 And off I'll tramp to the railroad-track,
 And take the cars for Boston, where
 I'll make my fortune, and then appear
 Sudden, some morn, to charming Carrie,
 And ask her right away to marry !
 And then how all the village will stare !
 Ha, ha ! who says that Absalom Day
 Does n't know how to make his way ?"
 And then would Absalom nod and wink,
 And laugh in his sleeve, till his eyes did blink
 In the bright effulgence of his dreams,
 His radiant hopes and brilliant schemes

So time wore on from week to week,
Till Absalom Day procured the cheek
About his great designs to speak.

'Twas a heavenly night!

The moon shone bright
Over the slumb'ring trees,
And the dreamy scent
Of the violets blent
With the freshness of the breeze;
And the twinkling stars —

But let them twink;

For all I really want to say
Is simply this, that Absalom Day
Was going away, and, of course, the pink
Died out in the cheeks of Caroline Gray,
As they stood entwined in a kind of a way
That some, perhaps, very silly may think.
They vow'd to love, and they promised to write,
And pledged to dream of each other at night,
And they said such love could never be bought
For gold or silver, — and so they thought;
And so, poor things!
They barter'd their rings,
And bade each other adieu.

II.

*Smiles and blushes and sighs and tears
Write the record of human years;
And all our sorrows and joys and cares,
Gains and losses and hopes and fears
Fade in blushes and sig's and tears.*

* * *

Bricks and mortar and dust and stones,
Crowded streets and aching bones,
Nothing to do and not much cash,
And board to pay for attic and "hash;"
No wonder Absalom thought himself rash,
As he toss'd and turn'd on his sleepless bed,
With a burden'd heart and an aching head.
Yet never a word he dared to write
To Carrie Gray of his serious plight;
Nor did he dream of her scarce a night,
But he was sure to 'wake in a fright!
Now was the time to test and settle
The strength and weight of Absalom's mettle;



Now was the time to gauge his mind, —
 Whether 'twas one of the stronger kind;
 Whether his bark would breast the wave,
 Or speedily sink in a nameless grave.

No friend had he to help him then,
 As friends are only for fortunate men;
 And still too proud to tell his grief
 To the one who would gladly grant relief.

There was the battle for him to fight,
 That call'd out all his mind and might;
 There was the trial for him to meet,
 The tempter to trample beneath his feet!

'Tis easy to guide the bark aright
 When winds are fair and skies are bright;
 But when the Storm-king rules the wave,
 Then must the pilot be skill'd and brave!

He is a hero who risks his life
 For his country's good, on the field of strife;
 He is a hero who bears his flag,
 Till naught remains but a tatter'd rag;
 He is a hero who lifts his arm
 To shield his friend from fatal harm;
 He is a hero who buffets the wave
 To pluck a soul from a watery grave, —
 Who climbs a ladder with stifled breath

To snatch a babe from a fiery death!
 Yes; heroes these supreme and grand,
 The pride and boast of the proudest land.
 But greater than all is the nameless youth,
 Whose only shield is the spotless truth, —
 Who laughs to scorn the tempter's power,
 And stands by the right in danger's hour!

'T was a rainy night; in fact, all day
 The rain came down in a drizzling way;
 And the wind was east, and chilly at that,
 And everyone felt as cross as a cat, —
 When every jaw with a hollow stump
 Did ache and shoot and twinge and jump;
 And you know it requires the saintliest grace
 To be calm and sweet with a swollen face.
 And some with "dyspepsy" groan'd and growl'd,
 And some with "rheumatiz" hopp'd and howl'd,
 And others had bunions, corns, and sprains,
 And all the hundred thousand pains
 That plague mankind whene'er it rains!
 'T was just the weather you "feel like fight," —
 When sweet is bitter and day is night,
 And nothing at all will come out right.
 'T was just, in fact, that kind of day



When some men scold their wives, by way
 Of letting off their pent-up spleen, —
 (Which all must own is horrid mean!)
 And fret and fume and fuss, and say
 Whatever she does is sure to be wrong, —
 The tea is weak, the butter is strong,
 The beef is burnt, the mutton is raw,
 The pudding—oh, pshaw! 'tis not worth a straw!
 And why do you look so sour? and why —
 But here, poor thing, she begins to cry;
 And none but a brute could bluster and blow,
 When those bright little tears begin to flow
 As Deacon Dodd once feelingly said
 About his Betsy, long since dead.
 "If ever an angel loved a man,
 That angel, sir, was Betsy Ann!
 If I happen'd to scold her, she was so meek,
 (Which the Deacon did seven times a week!)
 She'd clap her apron up to her eye,
 And never say nawthin', but on'y cry."
 But, ladies, perhaps you'd like to be told
 That Deacon Dodd, like other men,
 Waited a year, and married again;
 But he married a most inveterate scold!
 So now it's the Deacon's turn to be meek,

As he gets well rasp'd from week to week;
 But rather than open his head he'd burst!
 He wishes the second was with the first;
 But as she's as tough as a hickory limb,
 No doubt she'll live to say of him, —
 "If ever a saint the footstool trod,
 That man, that saint, was Deacon Dodd!"

'Twas a rainy night, and Absalom Day
 Was just as tired as he could be;
 He had searched since dawn in every way,
 And never a prospect could he see, —
 Except the prospect of roofs and rows
 Of chimney-pots and fluttering "clo'es,"
 And a patch of sky above his head, —
 A yard-and-a-half of dirty lead!
 'Twas down in one of those blighted streets,
 Where "boarders wanted" the stranger greets
 In many a window, and where you'll find
 "Doctors'" shingles of every kind:
 Cures by lifting and cures by shaking,
 Cures by boiling and cures by baking,
 Cures by drenching and cures by drugging,
 Cures by pounding and cures by hugging,
 Cures in the light by electric spark,



And cures by "spirits" in the dark ;
While others cure all human ills
With poison — in imperceptible pills !
The very home, it seems to be,
Where Humbug signs itself "M. D."

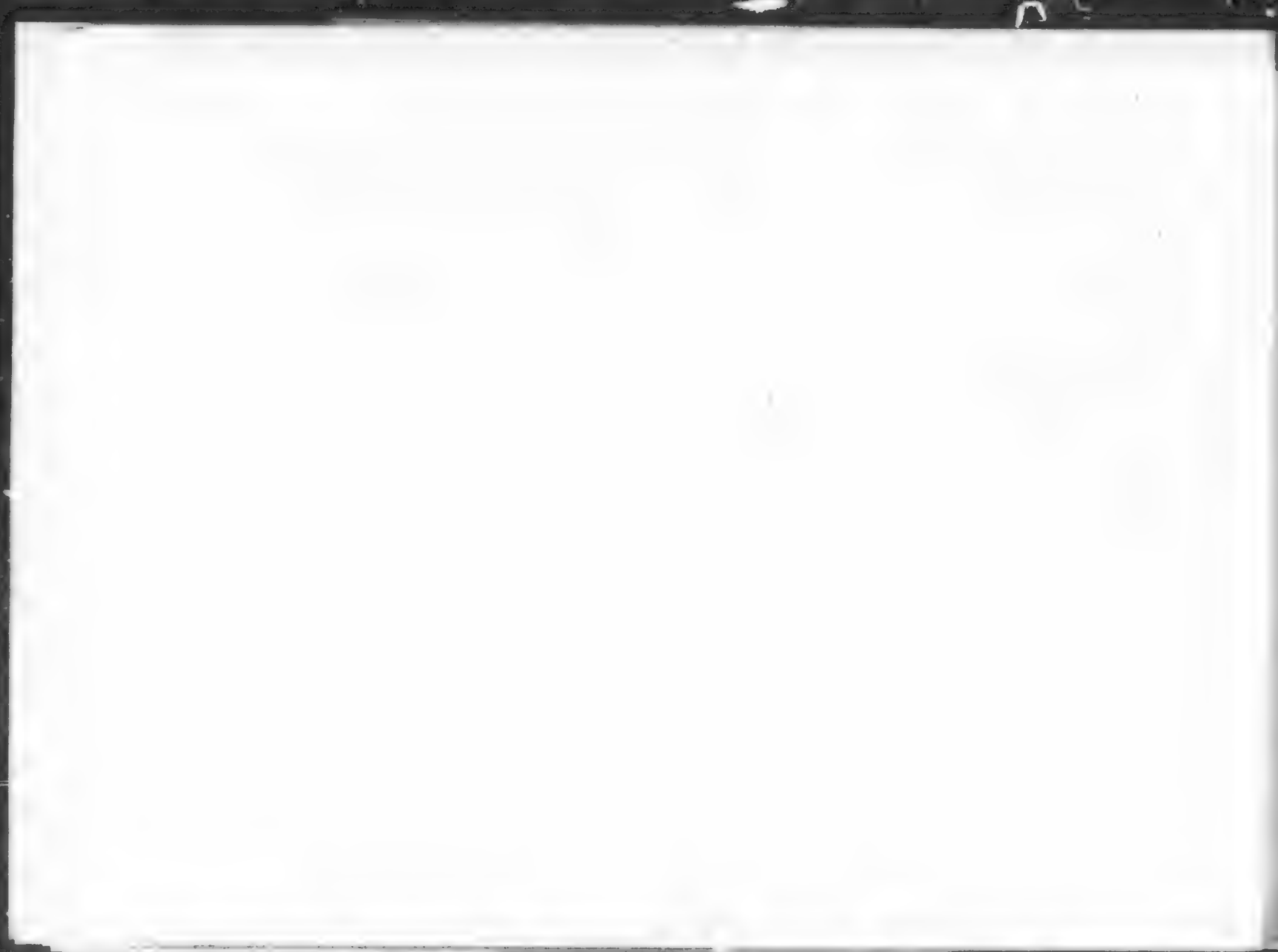
Here, in a boarding-house, Absalom ate
His hash and pie, and daily met
A score or so of wretched creatures
With hungry looks and wasted features,
Who had n't the cheek to ask the master
Whether the dish was hash or plaster.
Who could n't afford to be unruly,
Or even hint the beef was "bully."
Where sour sauce distorts the eye,
And painted paste is "punkin-pie,"
And soda-biscuits, green as lizards,
Take the coating off their gizzards ;
And where, like Egypt's bony guest,
Dyspepsia grins among the rest !

Ah ! how unlike his boyhood's home,
Beneath the blue, unclouded dome, —
Among the hills ! — the farm-house quaint,
With time grown gray and lack of paint ;
The cosy room and trundle-bed,
With snowy sheet and patchwork spread,

And well-washed floor and rustic chair,
And open window that let in the air
Laden with sweets of flower and tree,
Warble of bird and murmur of bee,
And a far-away view, where the mountains rise
Like great green steps to the bending skies !
And how unlike the wholesome "board"
That even "the Centre" could afford :
The yellow corn-cake, hot and sweet,
And golden butter, — a princely treat !
The bowl of cream, the berries blue
From yonder bank that drips with dew ;
And best of all to souls that feel,
A sainted mother bless'd the meal.

Ah, how unlike, indeed ! — But when
He thought of the lives of mighty men,
Who left their homes, and fought their way,
He clench'd his fist, did Absalom Day,
And cried, "I'll fight as well as they !"

Alas ! for the wonderful country-boy, —
His father's pride and his mother's joy, —
When to the mighty marts of trade
He comes, in Sunday best arrayed,
And in the crowded, lonely streets,



No friend's familiar visage greets !
 And, worse than all, there seems to be
 No place for such a hand as he :
 Although equipp'd for any toil,
 From running a bank to gauging oil,
 Yet, strange to say, where'er he goes,
 Some pert official pulls his nose,
 By saying, with a saucy leer :
 There's no one wants to see you here.

Each night, returning to his room,
 His heart o'erwhelm'd in deep'ning gloom,
 His roll of greenbacks growing slimmer,
 The luster of his "store-clothes" dimmer,
 He scarce perceives the faintest glimmer
 This side or t'other of the tomb !
 Ah ! city friends, don't slight, I pray,
 The country-lad that comes your way
 Uncultured he, no doubt, and shy ;
 But look in the depths of his honest eye
 And see the truth and purity there,
 The manly purpose, the worth that will wear,
 And traits of character rich and rare !
 Be civil, at least ; the answer you give
 To his mild request, in his mind may live

To please or plague him all of his life, —
 A soothing balm or a poison'd knife !
 "Kind words are cheap," says the proverb old ;
 'Tis false ! or why are they dearer than gold ?
 Don't blast his hope, or crush his heart,
 Or cruelly cause his pride to smart ;
 For, friends, believe me this is true,
 He may be rough, uncultured, shy,
 With blushing cheek and downcast eye,
 But yet, that boy you deign to view,
 That boy is just as proud as you !
 And he who laughs at the lad knows naught
 Of the diamond-seeds of Work and Thought,
 Or the vein of gold in his being wrought.
 For who are the men that rule the State, —
 The Rich, the Wise, the Good, the Great ?
 Were they not nurtured 'mong the hills,
 The blooming fields and sparkling rills ?
 Or where the pines their tassels shake,
 Or where the wild sea-birds break ?
 Not down in narrow streets and lanes,
 Where Folly sweeps and Want complains ;
 Where hydra-headed monsters glare,
 And noisome vapors taint the air ;
 Where human bears and tigers growl,



And human wolves and foxes prowl !
 No city hot-house plants are they,
 Papp'd and coddled every day,
 Afraid of rain and snow and sleet,
 Benumb'd with cold and baked with heat,
 And scared to damp their dainty feet !
 No city puppets, pale and thin,
 Familiar from their birth with sin ;
 Who call their fathers " Gov," " Old Chap,"
 And in his face their fingers snap !
 Vanish'd the dewy bloom of Youth,
 Crush'd out the sacred soul of Truth,
 Eager to grasp the poison'd cup
 That Pleasure's feverish hands hold up !
 Easy prey of pimp and knave,
 Folly's pupil, Fashion's slave,
 Gambler's victim, harlot's jest,
 Trickster's tool, policeman's pest, —
 Drinking, smoking, swaggering, sneaking.
 Vilest language ever speaking :
 Virtue-killers, soul-destroyers,
 Cheating, pilfering their employers, —
 Such the wretched youths you meet
 Crowding every city street !
 Glance o'er the list of mighty names

That on the roll of honor flames,
 And you will find the vast array
 Did from the meadows wend their way ;
 Stout, stalwart sons of toil were they,
 Who slept all night and wrought all day,
 Who breathed the purest air that blows
 O'er blooming fields and driven snows :
 Lithe of limb and stout of heart,
 Ready to take the hero's part ;
 Ready to battle for the right,
 As David left his flocks to fight
 Philistia's boastful man-of-might,
 And there, defenceless and alone,
 Destroy'd an army with a stone ;
 So now you find in every town,
 The men who bring the giants down,
 The men who guide the people's wills
 Were nurtured 'mong the rocks and rills !
 But where is Absalom ? Let us see ;
 In bed, I guess, or he ought to be.
 He said his prayers and closed his eyes,
 In hope that when the morn should rise,
 Some help may come from earth or skies.
 Oh ! what so welcome, sweet, and kind
 As dreamless Sleep to a troubled mind !



III.

*Peace ? Are you dreaming of peace ?
 There's peace alone in the grave ;
 And the battle with Wrong must never cease,
 While there is a Soul to save !
 Oh ! place your ear on the Heart,
 Physician of Human Life,
 And you 'll find the need of a Mightier Art
 Than yours in the terrible strife !
 The ocean is salt with tears,
 The wind is Humanity's moan,
 The earth is the dust of a million years,
 And every Soul is alone !*

* *

Oh ! there are seasons when the Past
 Comes o'er the soul like shadows cast
 By drifting clouds o'er summer seas,
 Whose blue waves, crested by the breeze,
 Grow gray awhile and dark and dun,
 As if they mourn'd the absent sun.

The soul grows sick with pensive pain,
 As half-remember'd scenes arise,
 And faces flit before our eyes,
 And words of love and lines of song,
 And deeds and days, forgotten long,
 Float back in airy forms again.
 Float back ; but like the fairy biro
 That trembles o'er the honey'd leaf, —
 A winged emerald, bright and brief,
 That melts ere one can say the word, —
 These visions fade, — a gleam — no more,
 And leave us lonelier than before !

In Blackberry Centre, you know, we left
 A dear little girl of her lover bereft :
 How slowly and sadly the days went by,
 You could plainly read in her pensive eye.
 But what gave Caroline most concern
 Was to think that nothing of *him* could she learn.
 They promised to dream of each other at night,
 And every day a letter to write ;
 But now some weeks had pass'd away,
 With never a word from Absalom Day !
 She knew he had "reach'd the city all right ;"
 For he sent a message the very next night,



With his street-address and the words above,
 (But never a line or hsp of love!)
 On a scrap of paper, by Caleb Skeggs,
 Who was "deown to Bawst'n sellin' eggs."
 But whether since then 'twas ill or well
 With Absalom Day, she could not tell.

Sometimes a spark of jealousy came
 And burn'd in her heart with a greenish flame:
 "What! can it be possible he has met
 Some city belle! Could he thus forget it,
 So soon, the sacred vows he made?
 Can love so bright so quickly fade?
 Oh, no! oh, no! it cannot be;
 My Absalom still is true to me!"
 And then, with her head on her hand at rest,
 She watch'd the sun sink down in the west
 And the birds in pairs come home to their nest.
 And then she gazed with a liquid eye
 On the hills they climb'd in the days gone by,
 And she thought of the schemes they had plann'd
 for life,

When she should be Somebody's own little wife;
 And the stars look'd sad as they throbb'd on high,
 And the night-winds wafted a gentle sigh,
 And the page she was reading while yet 'twas day

Was pucker'd and damp'd in a singular way;
 For she guess'd, with womanly instinct well,
 The trouble that Absalom dare not tell.
 She knew how slender the chance he had, —
 A modest, friendless, country-lad, —
 To reach the goal and grasp the prize
 That dazzles so many ambitious eyes.
 Well she knew of the struggle and strife
 For the gilded bubble of city life;
 And she saw him jostled from side to side,
 Weary in limb and wounded in pride,
 And what, perhaps, was worse than all,
 She knew his means were growing small!
 "Whether it please him," she said, "or not,"
 'I will show, at least, he is n't forgot.'
 So ere that night she slept a wink,
 She took her pen and paper and ink,
 And wrote such a beautiful, tender note,
 As might make your heart leap up in your throat.

We flatter ourselves, we bearded boys,
 That we are deep, and can conceal
 All that we know and do and feel, —
 Our business sorrows and club-house joys, —
 From the innocent creatures who make our tea;



But believe me, friend, that they can see
 Right through and through both you and me !
 As if your clove or cardamom-seed
 Could hide thy guilt in wine and weed !
 Ah, foolish mortal, do you suppose
 That only to smell the scent of a rose,
 And not the odor that's in your clothes,
 She's got that sweet little, pert little nose ?
 Pshaw ! your screen is a pane of glass,
 Through which she sees that you are — alas !
 By no means the lion you think within,
 But a long-ear'd thing in a lion's skin !

No, no, my friend ; don't try to hide
 Your fear, or shame, or sorrow or pride
 From the rib that was taken out of your side.
 'Tis he's to help you in life, and to share
 Not only your joy, but also your care.
 The problem that gives you weeks of pain,
 She may solve with a flash of her finer brain.
 She may not reason as well as you ;
 But her scissors can cut the knot in two.

Let no dark secret ever arise,
 Like an evil spirit in love's disguise ;
 Unless, indeed, you happen to be
 A brother of some fraternity ;

For then, perhaps, she might let it out,
 Whenever she felt inclined to pout.
 As the story is told of a mason's wife,
 Who plagued him almost out of his life,
 To learn the secret, whatever it be,
 "Ye mystycke *Worde*" of Masonry.
 Said he, "Now, Mary, if I should tell
 The awful secret, I know very well,
 That when you're mad, my darling dear,
 You'll rip it out that all may hear."
 Said she, "O Edward, never, never !
 'T will sleep in my heart's recess forever.
 Tell me — tell me, Edward, and I
 For thee will live and for thee will die !"
 "Well then, my love, 't is only this"
 (But here she planted a luscious kiss
 On the lips that really seem'd to burn
 With the wonderful word she was soon to learn !)
 "Now, Mary, remember my woe or weal
 Depends on the word I'm about to reveal."
 "O Edward, dearest, you may depend
 I'll keep it close till life shall end !"
 "You've said enough ; — now listen, my dear !
 The awful secret Hark ! do I hear
 A whisper ? . . . No ! . . . that Masonry screens —



Hush ! . . . is *Faba*, the Latin for beans ! ”
 Scarcely a week had pass'd away
 Ere Mary got mad, and what did she say ?
 Why she halloo'd out that all may hear,
 “ *Phæbe and beans ! I've got you there !* ”

But now to Absalom let us fly,
 Who slept that night as sweet as a child ;
 And when he awoke the sun was high,
 And Nature's self rejoiced and smiled ;
 And Absalom felt refresh'd and bright,
 His head was clear and his heart was light :
 He seem'd to hear, down deep in his soul,
 A whisper of hope, like the far-away roll
 Of an unseen sea, or the soft refrain
 Of the silvery Bow-bells, Turn again !
 Turn again, Absalom, turn again !

Scarce had he dress'd when the postman came,
 And Absalom heard him shout his name,
 And Absalom shouted back the same ;
 When down he raced with a rosy hue,
 And found a letter from — you know who !
 'Twas one of those long-and-narrow billies,
 That smelt of rose and was stamp'd with lilies, —
 A cunning wreath around a “ C.”

“ Oh, yes,” said Ab, “ this note's for me ! ”
 Then, with three strides, he climb'd the stairs,
 And shut and lock'd his chamber-door,
 And when the cover he wildly tears,
 A ten-dollar bill slips out on the floor.
 Then Absalom he went crazy, you see, —
 As mad as a maniac over the letter ;
 For he pinn'd it on to his pillow, that he
 Could hug and kiss it all the better.
 Did you ever hear of such freaks before ?
 Well ; such is Love, — till the honeymoon's o'er.
 If he read it once he read it at least
 A hundred times ; in fact, 't was a feast.
 He read it sitting and standing and lying ;
 He read it singing and laughing and crying ;
 He read it from top to bottom, and then
 He read it from bottom to top again !
 He read it so often, indeed, that he
 Forgot his breakfast, dinner, and tea ;
 And the sun of it was, that, over the way,
 Two or three girls,
 Fixing their curls,
 Were splitting their sides at Absalom Day !
 For, not being used to closing his blind,
 They saw, and thought he was out of his mind !



But "niver a bit," as Paddy would say,
He was only crazed in an amative way, —
His soul was stirr'd — he was wonderful glad;
For this was the first love-letter he'd had:

"DEAREST ABSALOM: * * * true,
While grass is green and skies are blue!" &c.
* * "So never despair, with strength and health,
Something beyond the reach of wealth.
Rain must fall, and the heavens must frown,
And flowers must fade, and fields grow brown,
And riches are winged like thistle-down.
From under the rocky ribs of the earth
Come light and heat of the winter hearth;
And up from the deep, dark caves of the sea
Are brought the pearls of the kings to be;
And out of the flint they crush the gold,
And water with sweat the seed in the mould;
And the sword that never is drawn from sheath
Shall win no worth the heavens beneath!
Then hold thee up with a manly brow,
And meet the storm that is driving now.
As long as there are millions to feed,
Millions to clothe, and millions to lead,
So long must the Plough, the Loom, and the Pen

*Await the guidance of earnest men.
Only be true to yourself and the Right,
And, chasing the steps of retreating Night,
Will rise the Giver of life and light."*

No victor that ever redeem'd his land,
No hero that comes with a rescuing hand,
No prophet that ever the future unroll'd,
No angel that came to the seer of old,
E'er brought to a soul such a healing ray
As did this letter to Absalom Day!
So when he was cool enough to write,
He seized, with tremulous hand, his pen,
Resolved to answer it there and then,
And send it off that very night!
But writing was not his forte, you know, —
The lines were labor'd and the words moved slow.
Not but the "hand" was easy reading, —
A fact that show'd his humble breeding, —
A hand to enter sugars and teas,
Butter and eggs and lard and cheese,
Pork and molasses and things like these, —
In sooth, a very good hand to teach;
But not a hand,
You understand,



For tropes and flowers and figures of speech.
 So when the letter was all complete,
 (Although 't was plain enough and neat,)
 It had a kind of a grocery look,
 As if 't were torn from the order-book.

He told her how hard it was to find
 "A place *just suited* to his mind."
 As if, poor boy, 't was his to choose,
 And 'this accept or that refuse!
 (But where 's the lad that dares to tell
 The naked truth about himself,
 Or to his lady-love disclose
 How many a time they pull his nose!)
 He gave her an inkling of city-life,
 Its mirth and madness, bustle and strife,
 Its splendor and squalor, pleasure and woe
 Rolling along in endless flow. . . .
 'T was a very sensible letter indeed,
 And one that a sensible girl could read
 With pleasure and profit, — no promises rash
 About "coming events," or nonsense and trash
 About Cupids and that; and as for the bill,
 'T was dropp'd, as it were, in a grocery-till;
 For he wrote a receipt, in a business-like way,
 And sign'd it, *pro forma*, "AISALOM DAY."

IV.

'Tis the *Field of Death!* and 'twas War's red
 hand
 That plough'd the furrows and sow'd the grain;
 It was human hearts that enrich'd the land,
 And the crop grew rank in the crimson rain!
 'T was here — 't was here that the flower and pride
 Of the Nation fell when the Reaper came,
 And the sheaves, as they bent down side by side,
 Were borne away by the lurid flame!

Oh think, brothers, think what a price was paid
 That the Land we love should be pure and free,
 That the corner-stone our Fathers laid
 Should ne'er be the base of Slavery!
 Oh say can it be that this blood-bought Land
 Shall sink to a home for the vile and base?
 No! — rather let the waves o'ersweep the strand,
 And dash it from Earth's polluted face!



'Tis WELL, in Heaven's appointed plan,
 We sometimes fail to grasp the prize
 For which we seek with eager eyes;
 For 't is the search that makes the man.
 Success through failure oft is found:

Had we but reach'd the place we sought,
 Or done the brilliant deeds we thought,
 Should we now hold this vantage-ground?
 The little slip, the small delay

That brought us panting to the strand,
 With bag and baggage in our hand,
 To see the vessel sail away! —

The chance we miss'd by just a hair,
 That made us mourn our luckless fate,
 And smite the breast, and cry, "Too late!"

How deep it plunged us in despair!

But, by-and-by, when Rumor's wing
 Wafts back the tidings that no more

The fated bark shall greet the shore,
 How grateful, then, the songs we sing!
 "We walk by faith and not by sight;"

And, groping blindly in the night,
 Abundant cause have we to bless
 The thorns that pierce with sore distress, —

That rend the flesh, but plainly say:
 "Turn back, for you have miss'd the way!
 Here Danger lurks in pitfalls deep,
 And bogs and dens and chasms steep!
 Oh turn and tread the beaten track, —
 There Safety leads, — turn back, turn back!"

Well, time roll'd on, and nothing yet
 Turn'd up to save our friend from debt;
 Although the secret of wealth to find
 Deeply exercised Absalom's mind.
 He sought with diligence far and wide,
 And left no feasible stone unturn'd
 By which a living may be earn'd.
 He heard of many an easy way, —
 A royal road to wealth, I may say;
 But none of them suited Absalom Day.
 No felon-maxim ruled the man:
 "Get money; honest, if you can;
 But if you can't, — get money sure;
 Be what you will, but don't be poor!"
 Not such *his* "policy;" better be dead
 Than sell his soul for the devil's bread!
 So things look'd dark on every side;
 For though the world, indeed, was wide,



His share contracted, in his view,
To just a strip six feet by two!

But *that* was the summer of 'Sixty-one,
When the World was startled with Sumter's Gun!
When there was Work for the Loyal and True,
And thousands found enough to do!

Oh, who has not seen a beautiful child, —
Frolicking, laughing, thoughtless and wild;
Light as the swallow that skims the stream,
Innocent-sweet as a maiden's dream;
Laving his limbs in the pearly dew,
Gathering flowers of every hue,
Where butterflies flit and money-bees hum; —
Who has not seen him pause to hear
The voice that flute-like floats to his ear,
As dancing homeward he answers clear:
"My mother is calling: I come, I come!"

So, many a youth as full of joy,
As careless-free as that innocent boy,
Catching the tones of the trumpet-call,
In lowly cottage and lordly hall,
Paused and listen'd that terrible day, —
Solemnly paused in work and play,
As glitter'd the sword and roll'd the drum;

Then, bright and beautiful, brave and strong,
They swept and swung in legions along,
And timed their march to the grand old song,
"Our Country calls: we come, we come!"

*We come to free our Brother, who has cried so long
in vain;*

*We come to lift the fallen, and to break the tyrant's
chain;*

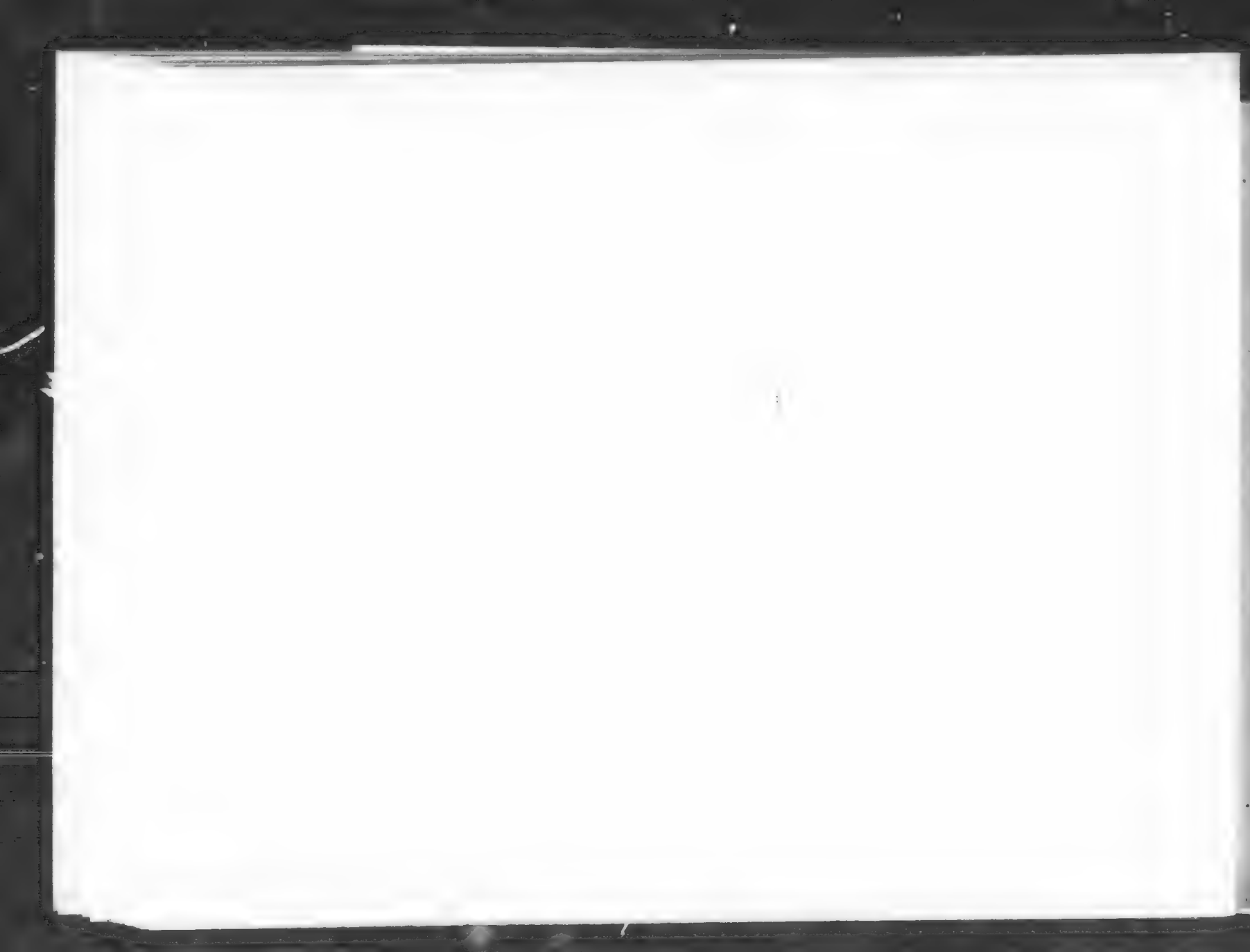
*We come to wash our Banner of its hell-polluted
stain. As we go marching on!*

*Our Fathers sealed the Union and are sleeping
side by side;*

*What God hath join'd together let no traitor hand
divide:*

*But one in Name and Nation will we evermore
abide! As we go marching on!*

Now, Absalom Day was one of the first
To heed the call, though he had no thirst
For a hero's fame or a soldier's life,
Nor was he a lover of danger and strife;
But still was he loyal, brave, and true, —
So he join'd the ranks of the "Boys in Blue."



The ranks are fill'd — the hour is come :
Now screams the fife and rolls the drum !
Through crowded streets the legions tread,
The Spangled Flag above their head.

“ Farewell, dear mother, child, and wife !
Farewell, sweet home ! Though sweet is life,
To make men free is sweeter far.
March on ! Behold the guiding star !
March on — march on for God and Right !
The northern hills sink out of sight.
March on, till old Virginia sees
The North Star flashing through her trees ! ”

Of all the boys in the camp, they say
There was no better than CORPORAL DAY :
Generous, noble, kind, and true ;
Brave to dare and ready to do ;
Above all mean and selfish ways, —
On every lip was the Corporal's praise.
‘T was just in the gray
Of a crisp autumn-day,
When “ Forward ! ” was heard ;
And the word
Put all the long column in motion.
No time for adieux or devotion ;

Each thought of the one that he loved,
As o'er the green meadows they moved.
They waded the stream, and were rising the hill,
When over their flags came the shrill
Ping-ping and zip-zip of bullets, and then,
On the crest of the hill, the gray figures of men
‘Mid puffs of blue smoke.

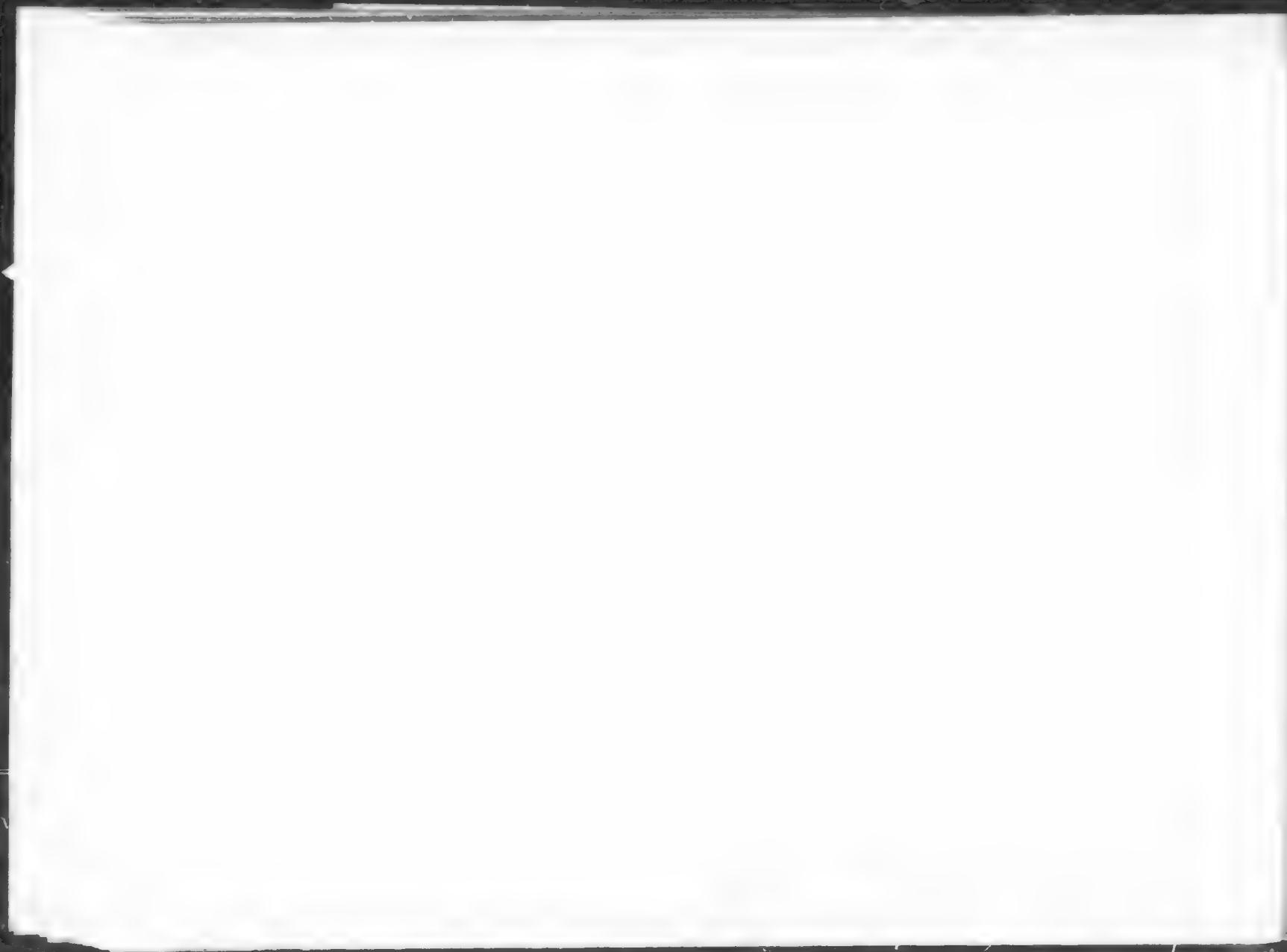
Then suddenly broke
A thunder-cloud over each head,
With a tempest of fire and lead.
And so for six hours it raged, till the dead
Lay in heaps on the field, and the river ran red.

* * *

Wounded and fainting and carried away,
Full soon in the action, fell Corporal Day !

* * *

Death gives a brave discharge. No more
Shall roll of drum or cannon's roar
Disturb the soldier now. Advance, retreat,
Are empty sounds ; success, defeat,
To him are one. Now gently fold
His waxen hands, so white and cold,
With decent care across his breast,
And lay him down to dreamless rest.



With quivering heart and trembling hand,
 Poor Caroline Gray, as pale as a ghost,
 Open'd the paper that came by post,
 And glanced o'er the tidings that darken'd the
 land ;
 When, breathless, bewilder'd and reeling, she read
 Her Absalom's name with the " Wounded and
 Dead ! "

'T is enough ! 't is enough ! — No need to be told
 Of the dark clouds of anguish that over her roll'd,
 Of her long weeks of loneliness, sorrow, and pain,
 Of the fiery fever that burn'd in her brain,
 Of her slow-coming strength, of her heart-hidde
 grief,
 Of the angels of mercy that brought her relief.

[IN CAMP. — *A Letter from Home.*]

Some were sitting, some were standing, others
 fishing in the lake ;
 Some were sound asleep and dreaming, others
 dreaming wide awake ;
 Some were patching up their tatters, others polish-
 ing their guns ;

Some were reading ragged letters, others popping
 sorry puns.
 Each was using his endeavor thus to pass the time
 away ;
 All were waiting, all were ready, all were eager
 for the fray.

When soon there came a murmur, like the rising
 of a gale, —

" Corporal Jones has got a letter from his sister
 by the mail ! "

" A letter, boys, a letter ! " — And each man was
 on his feet ;

" Corporal Jones has got a letter ! " — How we
 scamper'd up the street !

A letter from New England ! — 't was an angel
 from the skies.

Some came with eager questions, not a few with
 tearful eyes.

" Now please to read it, Corporal : let us hear it
 — every word. "

Yet nothing save the crackle of the paper could
 be heard ;

But that alone was music, and no sweeter seem'd
 to be, —



For it brought the leafy rustle of our dear old
 trysting-tree !
 With frequent interruption does he read it line
 by line, —
 How the corn-crop is progressing, and how
 flourishes the vine ;
 Of all that father's doing ; of something mother
 said ;
 How Sally Smith is wed at last, and Annie Lee
 is dead.
 Too soon the sheet is ended ; — how very brief it
 seems !
 But it keeps us long a-talking, and it lengthens
 out our dreams ;
 For our feet in fancy wander o'er the hills we
 know so well,
 And we linger 'neath the roof-tree where our
 heart's affections dwell !

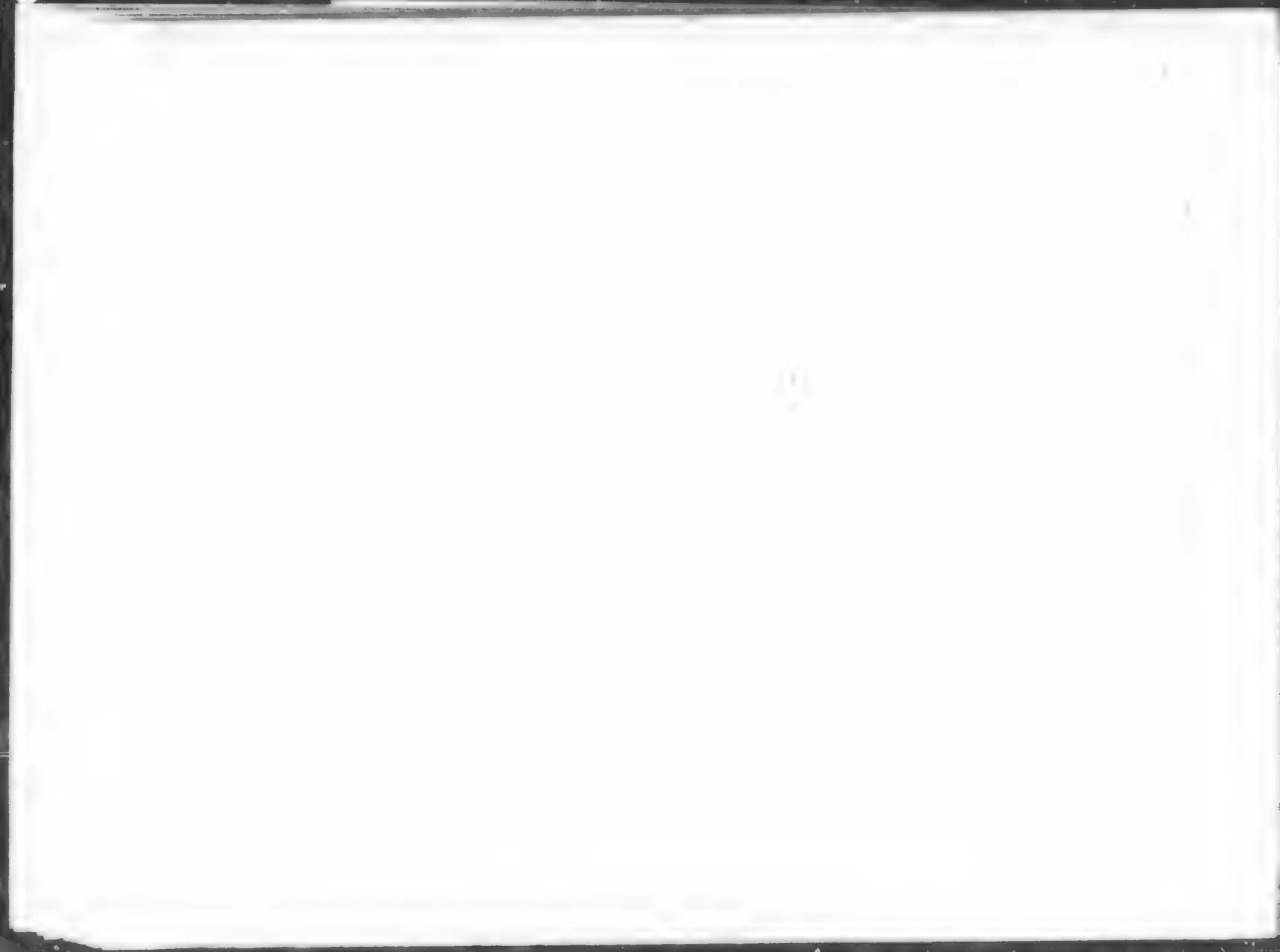
* * *

Blackberry Centre, one morning, was thrown
 Into wondrous surprise when the tidings were
 known
 That Caroline Gray had vanish'd away,
 And as to her whereabouts no one could say !

The children came to the school to find
 Lock'd was the door and closed the blind.
 Some waited in wonder and some in grief,
 And some of them utter'd a sigh of relief ;
 Till, one by one, they wander'd away,
 Wondering where was Caroline Gray.

And soon the village began to stir,
 And search on every side for her, —
 Led on by Dodd and Father Hobb
 And queer old Uncle Nathan Cobb,
 Captain Keene, of martial mien,
 And the village infidel, Orville Green.
 They search'd the school and ransack'd her room,
 And even tapp'd on the family tomb ;
 They dragg'd the river, they scour'd the plain,
 They beat the forest ; but all in vain !
 They peek'd and poked in every place ;
 But fail'd to find one track or trace
 Of Caroline's hand, or foot, or face.

At last they all began to say
 That Carrie must have been carried away
 By a patent-medicine vender, who
 Had disappear'd that morning too !
 He was a singular sort of chap,
 With a velvet coat and a seal-skin cap,



A coal-black beard and a sallow skin,
 And a piercing eye that look'd like sin;
 His head was cover'd with slimsy curls,
 And he always "went" for the prettiest girls.
 In Blackberry Centre he sold a lot
 Of his miserable trash; indeed there was not
 A house in the village in which, I am sure,
 You could n't have found a bottle or more,
 And warranted all diseases to cure.

The case was plain to all the people
 As the gilded vane of the Orthodox steeple, —
 At least, 't was plain to Dodd and Hobb
 And queer old Uncle Nathan Cobb,
 Who being the wealthiest men in the place,
 Of course, to the rest 't was a settled case.
 And so they met in the village-store,
 And talk'd the matter o'er and o'er.
 One said he always thought that Carrie
 Seem'd in a wonderful hurry to marry,
 "And only for Prudence Flint, they say,
 She 'd gone an' married that Absalom Day."
 Says Nathan Cobb, with a knowing wink:
 "The gails be all in a hurry, I think!"
 "Amen to that," groan'd Deacon Dodd;
 "But then, to my mind, 't is mighty odd

Why sech a sensible gal should go
 For to run away with a pedler so."
 "Ah yes!" says Hobb; "but thar's none can tell
 What a woman is till you knows her well."
 "That 's so," moan'd Dodd; "without a doubt,
 They 're all very nice, till they 're found out!"
 (Here every loafer seem'd to split
 His sides at the Deacon's pungent wit.
 For nothing, with some, is relish'd so much
 As a dig at Woman — when out of her clutch!
 Besides, there was n't a lounge there
 But knew what the Deacon had to bear;
 With a termagant wife and a spitfire laughter,
 Poor soul! he was always in boiling water.)

Says Nathan Cobb, "I'm inclined to say,
 She's gone a-huntin' fur Abs'lum Day;
 She had this hankerin' arter the lad,
 An' you know what a mis'able time she 's had
 Since he was wounded thar to Ball's Bluff."
 Says Father Hobb, "Why, sure enough!
 Thar's no knowin' *what* a gal may do,
 When she falls in love with a boy in blue:
 P'rhaps she 's 'listed herself — who knows? —
 An' is nussin' 'im now — in sojer's clo'es!"
 "Pshaw! no indeed," growls Deacon Dodd;



"For Absalom Day is under the sod, —
 Bein' shot and kill'd three months ago:
 She's run away with the quack, *I know!*"

What the Deacon affirm'd none dare dispute;
 For, out of his house, he was absolute,
 And thus the tribute he had to pay
 At home, he exacted when away.

And so they talk'd and the scandal spread;
 But I dare not tell one-quarter they said.
 While gallantry bids me suppress the things
 The women whisper'd in social rings, —
 At prayers, at work, at the quilting bee,
 Or over their magical dish-o'-tea.
 They said, ". with a quack,
 Just as soon as he turn'd his back!"
 And they said 't was awful to think what guile
 A face may hide in a saintly smile, —
 What plots and plans and deep designs,
 What crooked ways and hidden mines!
 That modest cheeks and downcast eyes
 Are all very well—*when they tell no lies.*
 But, as for *their* parts, they'd rather run
 The risk of a romp than trust in a nun!

Oh dear! oh dear! but did n't they slay
 The poor little school-ma'am, Caroline Gray!

V.

*"Behold the river that slowly moves
 Along the valley deep and wide!
 The ghastly light of the clouded moon
 But half reveals the mighty tide.
 What seems the wail of a funeral march
 From out of the current faintly comes,
 With a measured beat, like countless feet,
 Timed to the roll of : :uffed drums.*

*"Look, mortal, look!" said the Tongue unseen;
 "Fear no, but look, and thou shalt know!"
 I gazed in awe, for the serried ranks
 Of men in myriads march'd below.
 Oh, such a river! And who? or what?
 "A phantom host," the Voice replied:
 The shadowy files of martyr'd men
 Who, for your freedom, fought and died!"*



AWAY, away, the sceptic cold,
 Who tells me hearts are bought and sold ;
 And that nor faith, nor love, nor truth,
 Time-honor'd age, unsullied youth,
 Nor manly worth, nor female grace
 Survives the ruin of the Race !
 That naught exists beyond the tomb
 But dark, profound, eternal gloom ;
 And neither life, nor hope, nor heaven
 To Man, *the Fatherless*, is given !
 Away, vile sland'rer of your kind !
 Begone ! — among the demons find
 A region suited to your mind ;
 For 't is your lusts that make you blind !
 Oh what has mark'd this wondrous Age, —
 Of all the ages past the flower, —
 Have we not seen the fiendish power
 Of despots quail before the rage
 Of Freedom's sons ? And not alone
 In this broad Land, we call our own ; —
 But o'er the world, — the glorious sight
 Of millions marching for the Right.
 'T is but the Soul, that never dies,
 Her pinions pluming for the skies.

"The age of Chivalry is o'er !"
 Cries Burke in shame, because to save
 A queenly martyr from the grave,
 Ten thousand swords leap'd out no more.
 Yet, swords there are as swift to leap
 In Truth's defence and for the Right,
 As e'er were drawn by plumed knight,
 O'er whom romantic maidens weep.
 And there were heroes then, and now,
 Of whom the world may never know,
 Who bear their martyrdom of woe
 With dauntless heart and placid brow ;
 And blind is he who turns the page
 Of hist'ry back to find an age
 That purer, nobler spirits give,
 Than this great Now in which we live.

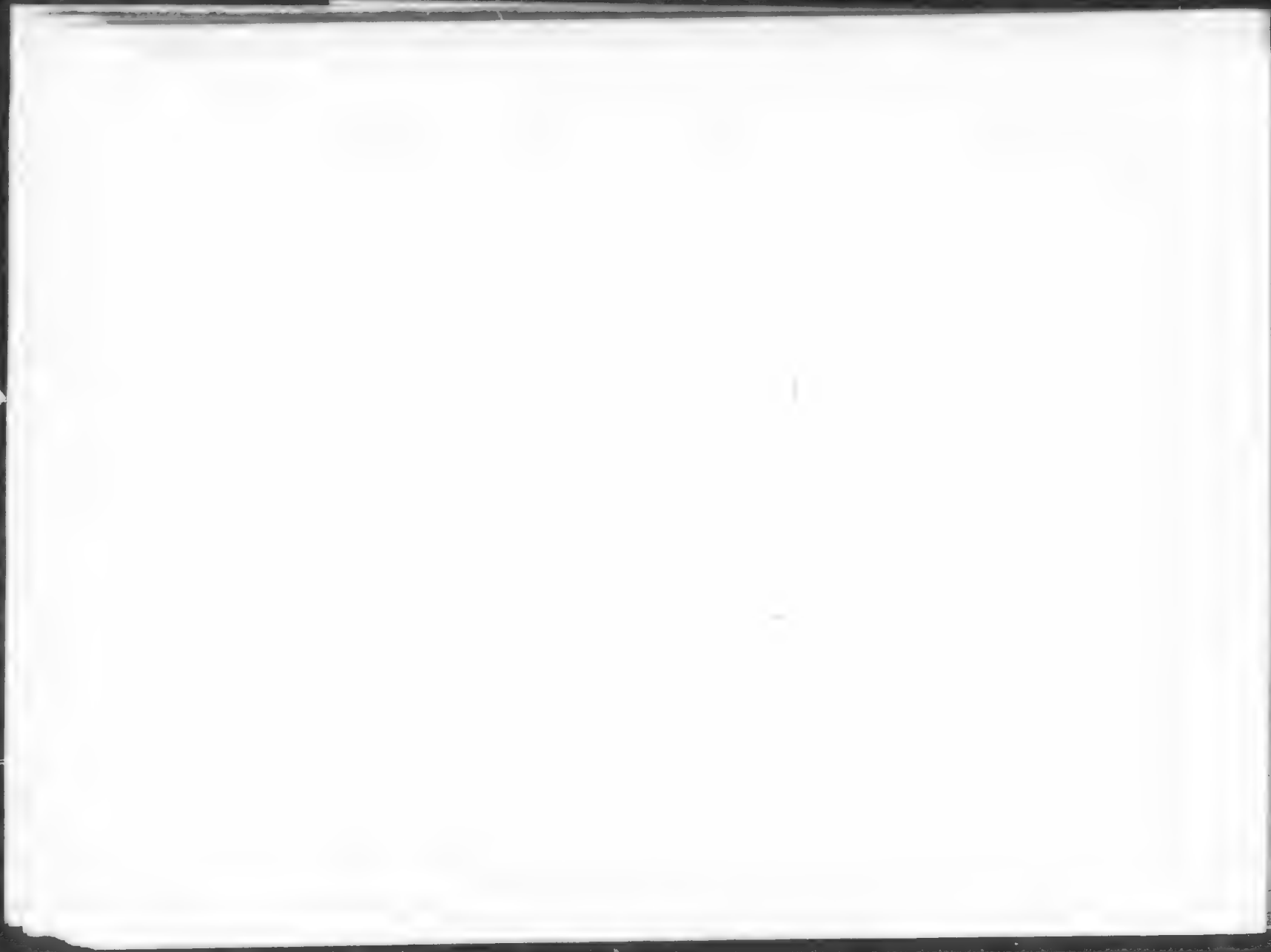
"The hospital-shed," fair maid, you say ?
 Follow my lead, I'll show the way.
 Carefully pass, and hold your breath, —
 The air is rotten, and reeks with death ! . . .
 Aye, this is War ! — The field, you see,
 Is badly cover'd ; but follow me. —
 Horse and rider, wagon and wheel,
 Cannon and caisson, leather and steel,



And a thousand nameless shatter'd things,
 That frenzied Battle in fury flings,
 Lie scatter'd in wild confusion round, —
 A nation's wreck bestrews the ground !
 The rising moon, like a blood-red shield,
 Throws ghastly shadows along the field.
 Our footsteps cling to the pitchy mud ;
 The kneaded clay is soak'd in blood ;
 And fleshless fingers seem to grasp,
 And rigid hands in agony clasp,
 And Hate, on many a marble face,
 Forever is stamp'd in Death's embrace !
 Faint moans are heard, and gurgling cries,
 And dead men stare with stony eyes,
 And pale, sulphureous vapors rise,
 And roll and writhe and bend and crawl,
 Like serpents, round and through it all !
 But fear you not ; of this mighty throng,
 No shadow may rise to do you wrong.
 The guard is relieved ; no sentinel keen,
 With "halt !" and gleam of bayonet, seen ;
 For the tempest of battle is hush'd to a breath,
 And Victory sleeps on the bosom of Death !
 Aye, this is War, — the "glorious" way,
 From cursed Cain's primæval day, —

In every clime and every age,
 In spite of prophet, priest, and sage ;
 Of Him whose hallow'd name is dear
 To Christian hearts ; of orphan's tear,
 Of widow's wail, of bosoms wrung,
 And pleadings of an unseen Tongue ;
 In spite of all the vaunted light
 Of "modern culture ;" and in spite
 Of justice, reason, truth, and right, —
 The *only* way that Men and Brutes
 Can end their snarlings and disputes ! . . .

Ah ! see this child, — so young, so fair ! —
 With dimpled cheek and golden hair ;
 His blue eyes fix'd, his white lips dumb,
 One baby arm around his drum,
 And one, with life-blood stain'd, is press'd
 Upon the wound that rends his breast.
 Are there no far-off eyes that swim
 In anxious tears, awaiting him ?
 Is there no heart that lonely yearns
 Till her brave soldier-babe returns ?
 Too sweet, too tender blossom, thou,
 Fair Boy, to deck the Victor's brow ;
 But not, alas ! too tender-sweet
 For War to trample 'neath her feet !

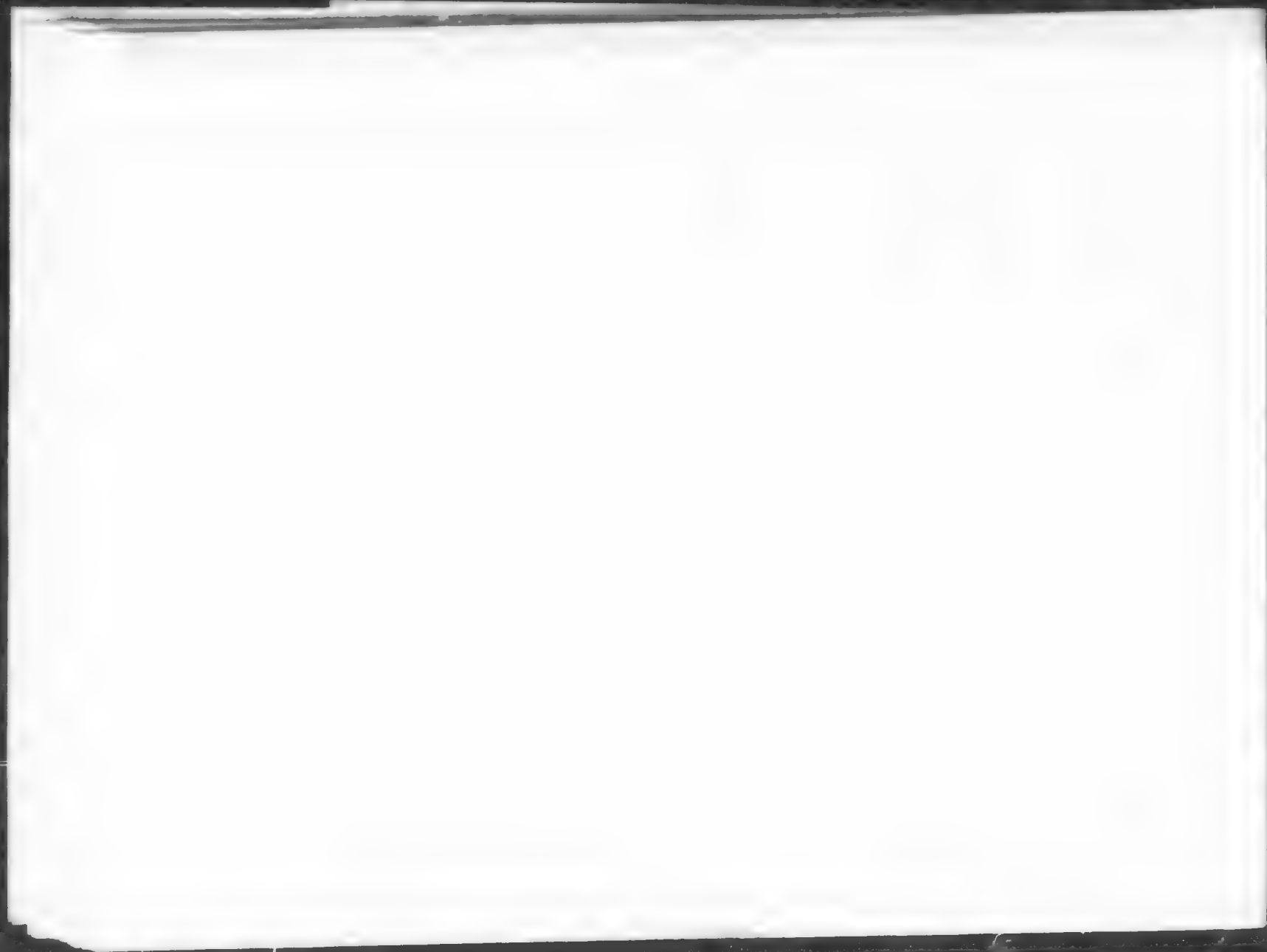


Fearful, indeed, was the work to-day !
 But follow my steps, — I'll pick the way, —
 We're almost there. . . . One's senses swim,
 And things look weird, unearthly, dim. . . .
 Beware the trench ! Too nigh the rim,
 You're apt to slip ! . . . It must be Love
 That draws you here, like a messenger dove :
 Here, in the midst of the mould'ring dead ;
 Here, to the hideous hospital-shed ;
 Here, where Woman should never be ;
 Here, with horrors she dares not see !
 Yet, like an angel, calm and sweet,
 She comes ! she comes with winged feet :
 O God ! she comes to a hell like this, —
 Straying away from heavenly bliss :
 A beam of light in a dungeon dank ;
 A blooming rose among brambles rank ;
 A single star, through storm-clouds riven ;
 A link that binds us still to Heaven. . . .

See ! here 's the place — the hospital-shed :
 Here are the living, and there . . . the Dead.
 No wonder you start, and tremble so :
 'Tis a frightful hole. . . . D' you think y'll know
 His face again ? . . . In this stifling room,
 Scores are waiting their welcome doom, —

Wishing for death,
 At every breath,
 And envying those that are in their tombs. —
 Hah ? . . . Who is this in the filthy hay, —
 Pale and famish'd, and seeming to pray ?
 Can it be possible ! . . . Corporal Day !
 Poor boy ! poor boy ! . . . One breath of air,
 One cup of water, cool and clear,
 From his mountain-home, could we but bear
 To his livid lips — his burning brow !
 One word, one act of kindness now ; —
 One gentlest touch of a human hand,
 That he may feel in Christian land, —
 One deed of love, however small,
 Ere yet the spirit burst its thrall,
 To join the ranks at the general call
 Of the last great muster-day !
 O God ! shall he sink to a nameless grave,
 In the Land whose honor he dies to save ? . . .
 To-morrow, to-morrow his murd'ers come,
 And finding his blue lips cold and dumb,
 Will shovel him out of the way !

The morning dawns, and Absalom's eyes
 Languidly open in dreamy surprise :



"What! still alive? . . . 'T is coming now.
 I feel the cold sweat bead my brow. . . .
 I see a vision bright and sweet:
 I seem to see the village-street, —
 My own loved home, — I know it well!
 I hear — I hear the Sabbath-bell!
 I seem to see the dear old hills;
 I seem to hear the murmuring rills.
 The church, the store, the mill! How plain
 Before my mind they come again!
 Is this a dream? . . . or am I dead?
 An angel bends above my head.
 She smiles, how sweet! She fans my brow
 With fragrant wing. . . . What! . . . can it be?
 Or do I dream, and seem to see?
 It must! . . . Great Heavens above! 't is she!
 My love!" —

Ah! is he dreaming now?
 No, no! The vision fades away, —
 His arms are round his Carrie Gray!

One!
Ring the bells, one!
One in love, one!
One, ever one!

Ring the bells, one!
One country, one!
No more divisions
Victory won;
Question decided;
Slavery gone!
Ring the bells, one!
One again, one!
North and South, East and West:
One banner, one!
Flows through each throbbing breast
One current, one!
Ring the bells, one!
Marching for home;
Battle no more;
Fling to the door;
Come, all come!
Love them; caress them;
Honor and bless them!
Ring the bells, one!
Ring again, one!
Blessed God, one!
One, ever one!
One!



"O Woman! in our hours of ease,
 Uncertain, coy, and" — if you please,
 You'll find the rest in Walter Scott,
 Or in your hearts, if you have got
 Hearts that have ever felt in life
 A mother's love, a sister's care,
 Or what is still more angel-rare,
 The fond devotion of a wife!
 Wife, the weaver, — noble name! —
 That from sturdy Saxon came,
 When the man, with shield and bow,
 Went to meet th' invading foe;
 Or in forest slew the boar;
 Or the gaunt wolf at the door.
 While the weaver, gentle wife,
 Sat securely, free from strife,
 By her rosy brood surrounded,
 Where rude health and mirth abounded, —
 Chanting some love-lispings rhyme.
 With her shuttle keeping time;
 As beneath her fingers roll'd
 Homely frieze or cloth of gold.
 Wife, the weaver: oh 't is she
 Weaves the web of destiny, —
 Weaves the web of life that may

Gleam with threads of golden ray,
 Or as black as funeral pall,
 Round our dead hopes darkly fall!

Excuse this digression. Permit me to say
 That I was in Blackberry t' other day;
 But oh! what a change the years have made!
 For now the railroad track is laid,
 And the village does n't look half so sweet,
 Nor the people nearly so happy and neat;
 For city shoddy has found them out,
 And turn'd their heads to the right-about.
 The girls go following fashion's tracks,
 With bunches of ribbon pinn'd to their backs;
 And the boys contrive to cut a dash,
 With cane and ulster and swelly moustache.
 In fact, so — humbug discover'd a spring, —
 "Kind Nature's Own Hygienic River
 Of Health," he named it, "and just the thing
 To correct the Great American Liver!!" —
 And so he built around his well
 A rambling, rickety, wooden shell,
 And call'd it, "The National Hotel."
 For once the village was all alive,
 And everything seem'd to blossom and thrive;

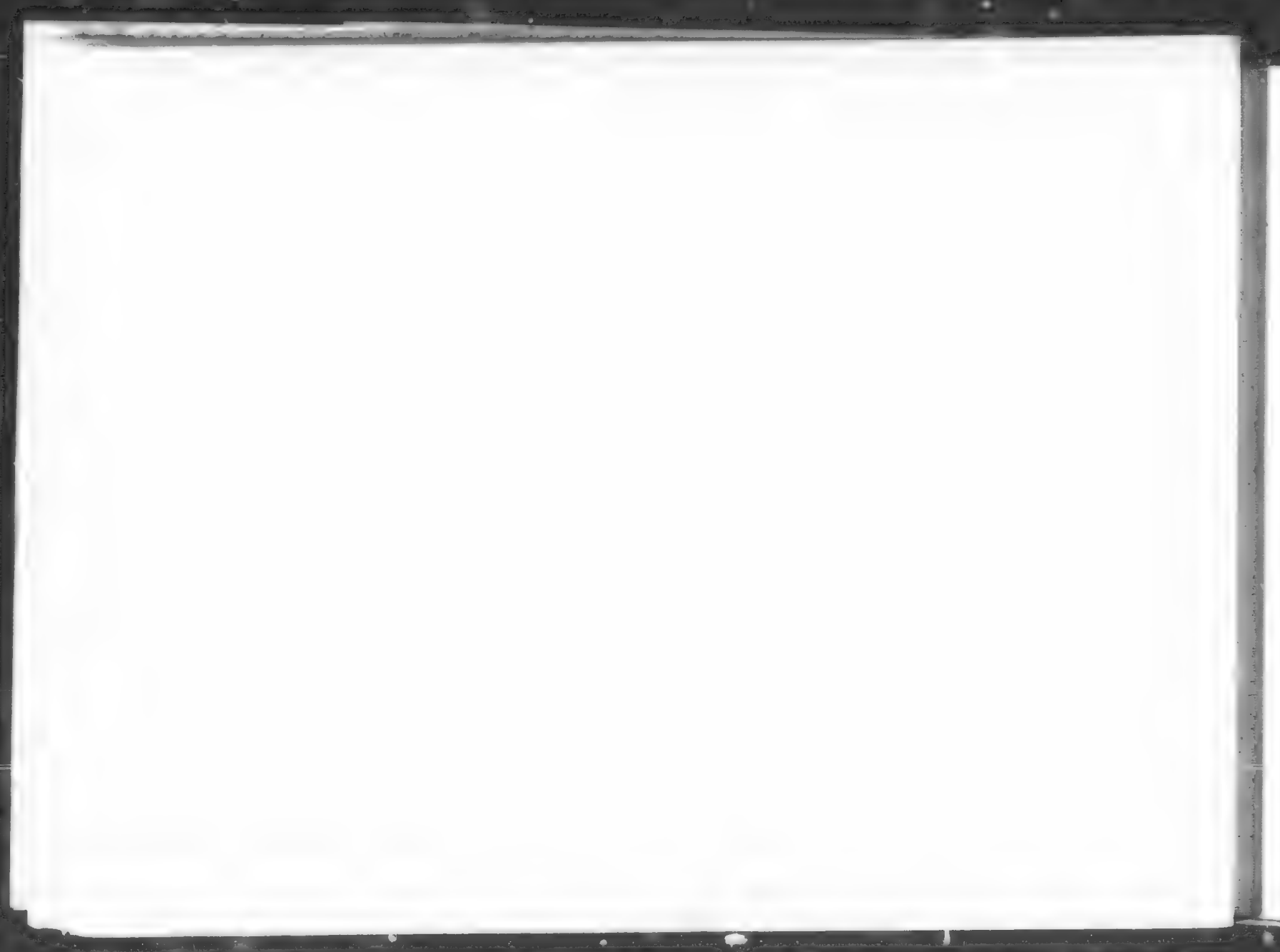


And the folks declared, "Sich a noble ventur'
 Would be the makin' of Blackberry Centre, —
 Real estate would rise like a rocket,
 And every lunk might fill his pocket!"
 But Deacon Dodd took t' other side,
 And said, "'T would only puff up thar pride,
 And fill thar heads with nonsense and trash,
 In place of fillin' thar pockets with cash!"

But alas for the monster of lath-and-plaster!
 It proved to the Centre a grand disaster, —
 A roost for rogues from Maine to Texas,
 And miserable sinners of both the sexes;
 Till Blackberry Centre stood aghast
 To see "The River of Health" so fast,
 And wonder'd how long this thing would last!
 But it did n't pay; so, of course, one night,
 The place burnt down: "and sarved 'em right,"
 Said Deacon Dodd. . . . But the sin and shame
 Remain to be cleans'd by a fiercer flame!

Well, I thought I'd just step into the store
 Where all was sold, and a little more,
 When there it was the same as before! —
 The strings of onions, the pens and ink;
 But out of the denajohn . . . nothing to drink!
 Nothing stronger than ginger-beer;

For actually "the Law" 's enforced up here,
 And nothing's imbibed by any . . . except
 By those who know where the moisture is kept.
 And who should I see but Dodd and Hobb
 And queer old Uncle Nathan Cobb!
 But not the man of martial mien,
 Nor the village infidel, Orville Green:
 For over the gallant Captain's grave
 The daisies droop and willows wave;
 And as for the infidel, strange to say!
 He disappear'd one stormy day,
 And never again was heard or seen
 A sight or sound of "Awful" Green, —
 The only man who spoke right out,
 What others held in silent doubt.
 But there were the rest, the same as before,
 The bats that cluster a country-store,
 On barrel and box and round the door;
 And behind the counter, brisk and gay,
 Plump and jolly, — who d' you say?
 Yes; you 've guess'd it, — Corporal Day!
 "This is Corporal Day," said I;
 "Or else his spirit I see here?"
 "Himself," quoth he, with a twinkling eye,
 "I.. flesh-and-blood, so do n't you fear!"



"A clerk again, you poor old . . . hoss?"

"Why, yes," said Ab; "both clerk and boss.

I own the store;

And, what is more,

I own that house across the way."

"You do n't!" said I,

With an envious sigh;

"For that's the house of Caroline Gray!"

"It was," said he; "but I'm happy to tell

That I own Carrie herself as well!"

Cries Nathan Cobb, "That ain't quite trew;

Fur some folks sez that she owns yew!"

Here Absalom blush'd, and Dodd and Hobb

And queer old Uncle Nathan Cobb

And every loafer round the store

Went into fits, with a thund'ring roar.

"Why, did n't you know," quoth Deacon Dodd,

Tipping the others a wink and a nod,

"Did n't you know that Carrie an' he

Has sot up shop — now, let me see, —

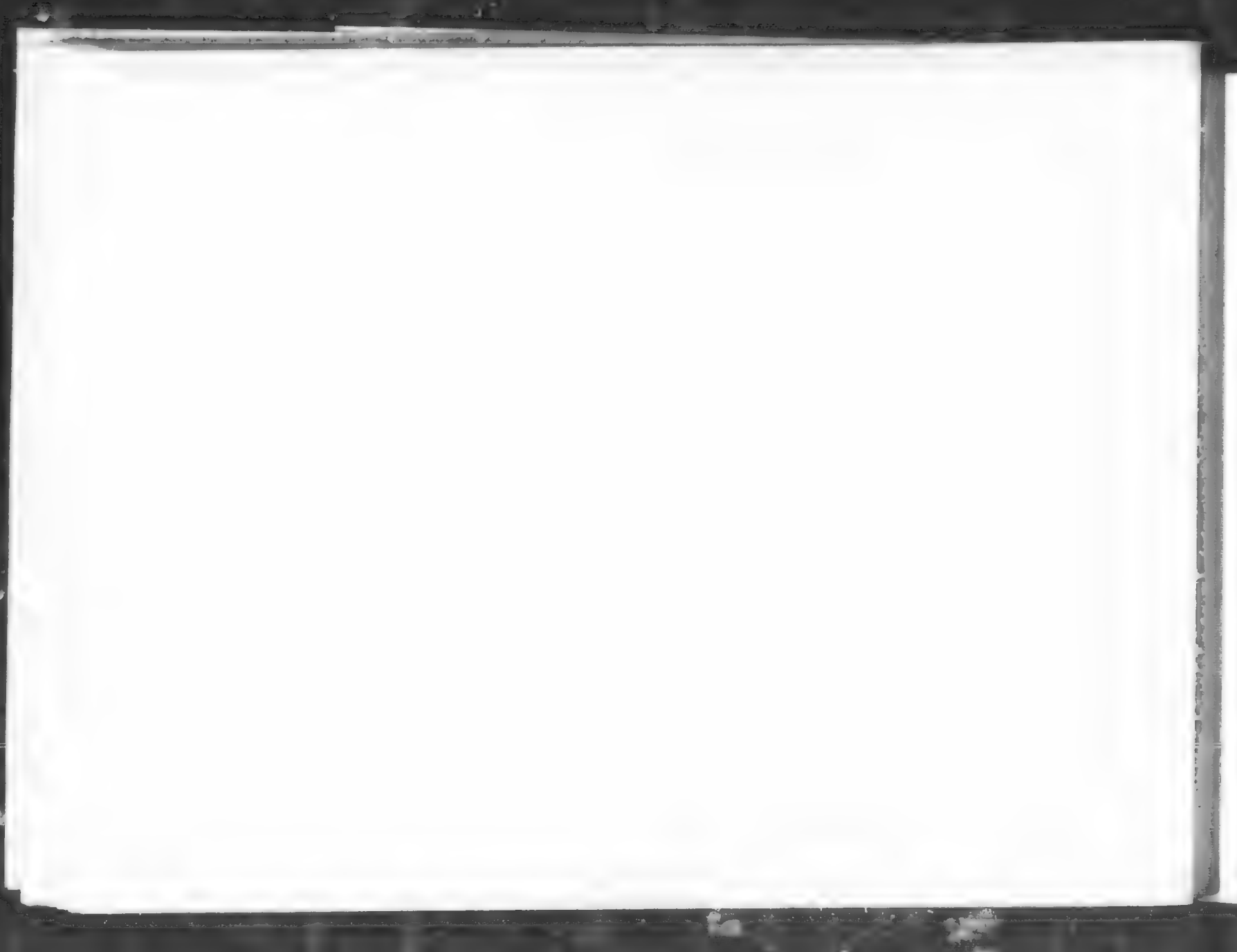
I most furgit, so fast time flies; —

But look! . . . d'ye see them three pooty little

youngsters over yander makin' mud pies?"

"I do," said I. "Wall; them is thars."

Episodes of City Life.





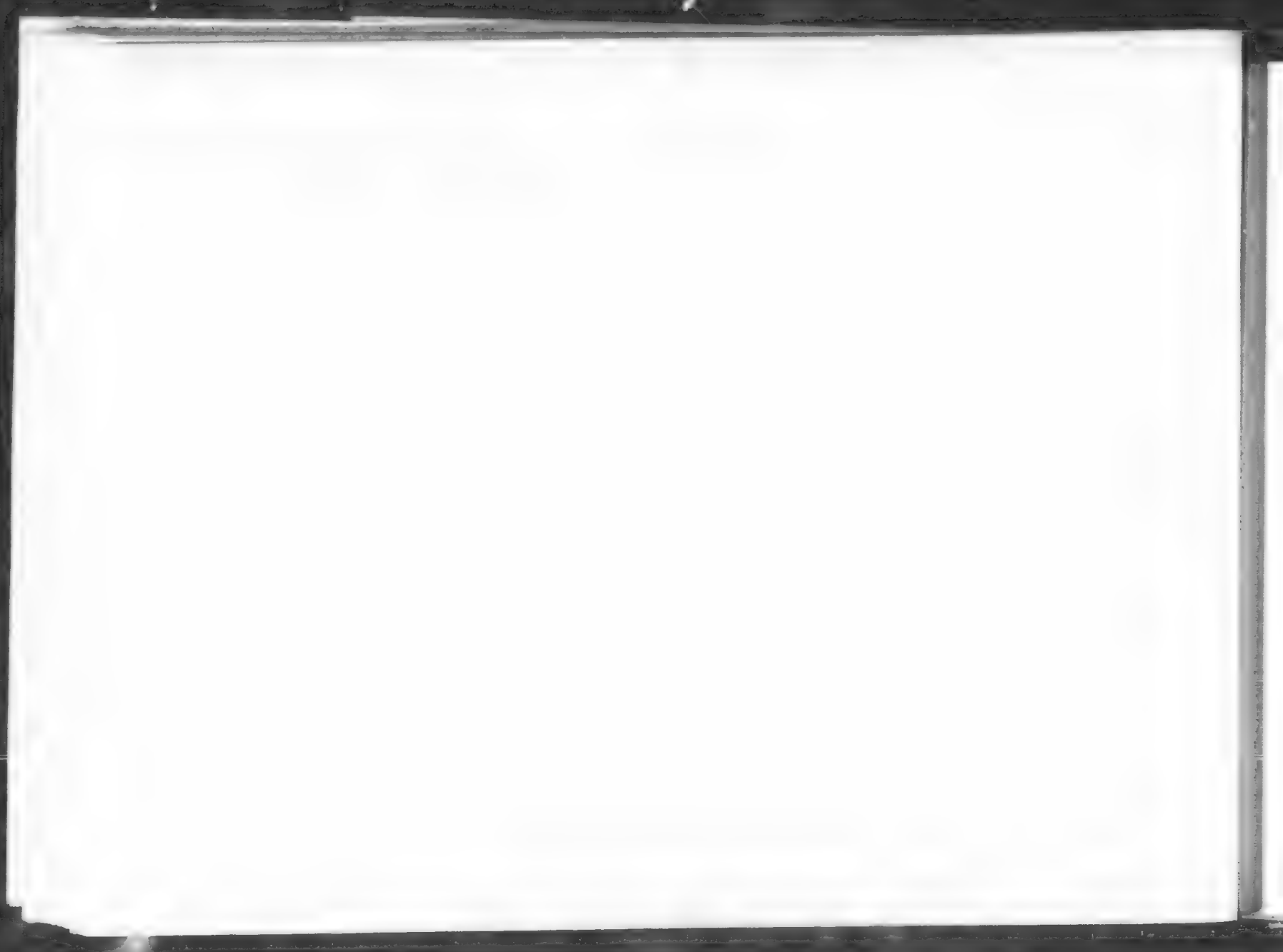
EPISODES OF CITY LIFE.

MATTER-O'-MONEY.

'T WAS once a true saying that matches are made
In the regions above ; but indeed I'm afraid,
By the brimstone that covers them now, to our
woe,

They are pretty much made in the regions below !
It is matter-o'-money, I fear, and the rest,
As a general rule, is delusion at best ;
The wiles and the smiles, the love-lisping rhymes,
The vows of devotion, the rapturous times,
The fair orange-blossoms, the sweet wedding-
chimes, —

May all be resolved into dollars and dimes !
But here let me tell you some stories, by way
Of pointing the moral I wish to convey.



An agent there was of some nondescript kind,
For whom or what business, I never could find:
His name was John Smith; but he was n't to
blame

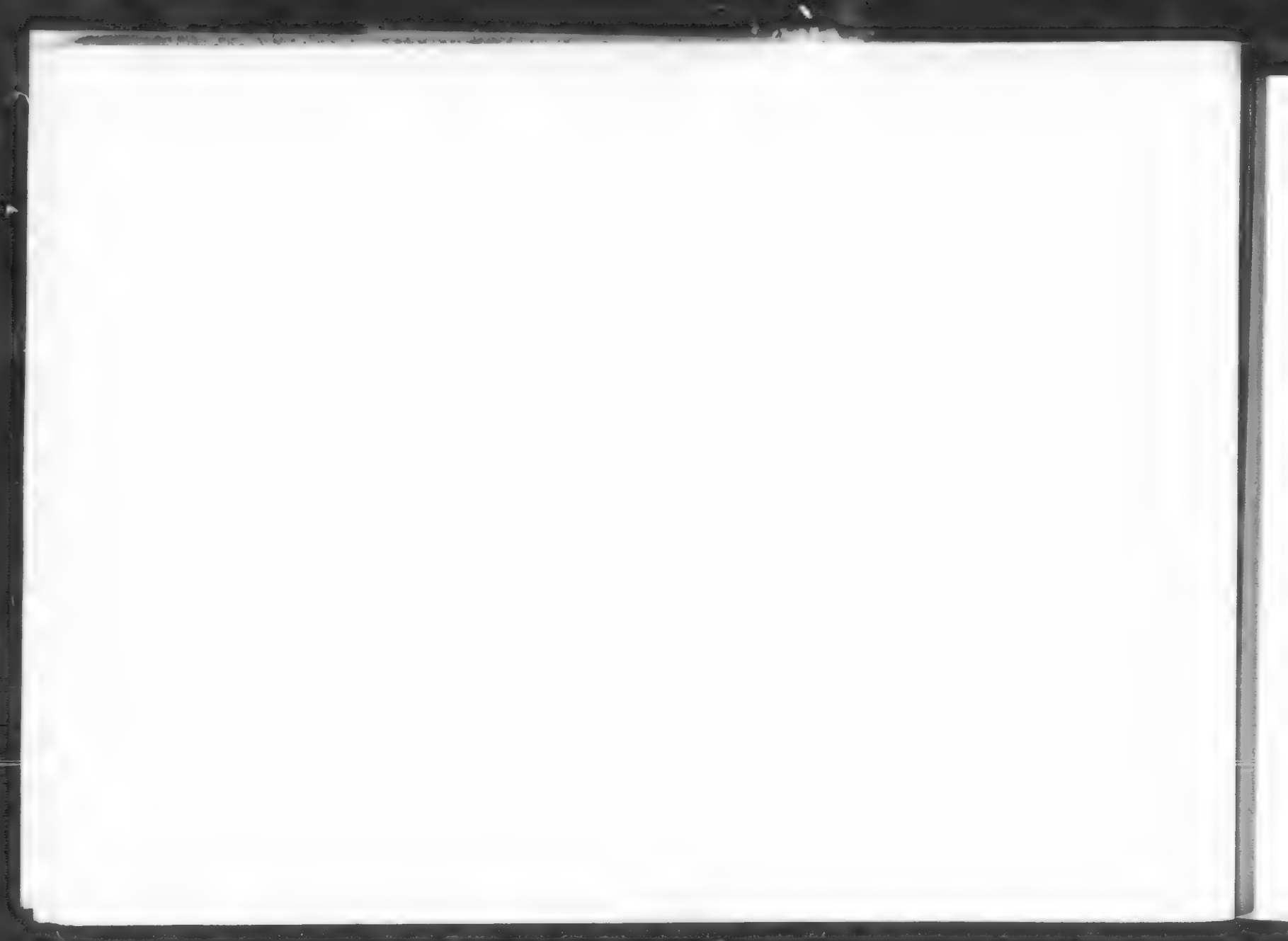
For bearing through life such a singular name.
'Twas none of the Smiths that you know so well:
Oh no! — no relation, I'm happy to tell.
Your Smiths are all gentlemen — men of pure gold;
But mine . . . well, you'll know when the story is
told.

An office he had, with a desk and a chair,
A cash-book and journal, a mighty spittoon,
A map on the wall like a view of the moon.
Yea, such was his den; but he seldom was there.
In fact, he was usually taking the air
On Washington Street, when his labors were o'er,
Or picking his teeth at the Parker-House door.
Though I rather suspect that he seldom was able
To more than behold in the distance the table!
But as to his funds I am quite in the dark,

His bank-book I never could see;
I can scarcely suppose that he borrow'd, — altho'
I'm aware that he borrow'd of me!
But now for the climax. One day Danny Cupid
Hit Smith with an arrow, which really was stupid

In Dan, for he shot at a very poor time, —
When Smith had n't even the ghost of a dime.
Now every one knows, who has gone thro' the mill,
That your Love is a wonderful drain on the till!
They say Love is blind — wanting only to flatter.
Oh no! it is ravenous: that's what's the matter.
Just think of the oysters and jellies and creams,
The champagne and chickens, the very fast teams,
The cartes-de-visite and the billets in reams!
Just think of the presents in trinkets and rings,
In brooches and lockets and such little things;
Then think of the lecture, the concert, the play,
And a score or more items for which you must pay;
And to say Love is blind, is out of the question:
Its sight only rivals its monstrous digestion!
How many young gallants are forced to despair
Of marriage with even five hundred a year!
Five hundred! Absurd! They scarcely are able
To pay for their weeds, not to mention the stable;
And as for the tailor, why, law bless your heart!
Do you think that to settle such bills would be
smart?

The Romeo where that could tell Juliet,
"I feel rather fearful of falling in debt!"
The Juliet where that *would* tell Romeo,



"Then, surely, my darling, you must n't do so!"
 Were it not for the pocket that men are afraid,
 You'd sail the seas over to find an old maid;
 And bachelors, then, would be rarer than pearls:
 'Tis their ruinous cost makes the surplus of girls!
 Smith's lady's papa was a millionaire, worth
 A bushel of bonds and some acres of earth; —
 "All of which," chuckled Smith, in a confident
 way,

"All of which will be mine and Maria's some
 day!"

But, alas, very soon he found out to his woe,
 Without money himself, that his plans were no go,
 That a penniless suitor may never aspire,
 Whoever he be, to the hand of Maria;
 For Smith when he spoke to Papa of his suit,
 Was threaten'd with warm application of boot,
 And he could n't have madden'd him more, I
 suppose,

Had he taken the solid old man by the nose: —
 "What, you, Sir, presume, Sir, my daughter to
 marry!

Do you think, Sir, she's open to Tom, Dick, or
 Harry? —

A pauper like you, Sir, my child to be lost on, —

The heiress of Tadpole! — the Tadpoles of
 Boston? —

The Beacon-Street Tadpoles, whose word is their
 bond,

Born and bred, every one, on the banks of Frog
 Pond!

Do you know that I'm worth, Sir, a million or
 more?

That my houses and tenements count by the score?
 Do you know that my bonds and my bank-stock
 alone

Foot up half-a-million?" (Smith utter'd a groan.)

"And are you aware, Sir, this wealth, when I die,
 Will all be my daughter's?" (Poor Smith gave a
 sigh.)

"Then, what are you dreaming of, miserable cur,
 To sneak in my office and ask me for . . . *her*?
 Clear out, Sir; and never again be so bold
 As to let me your plebeian visage behold!"

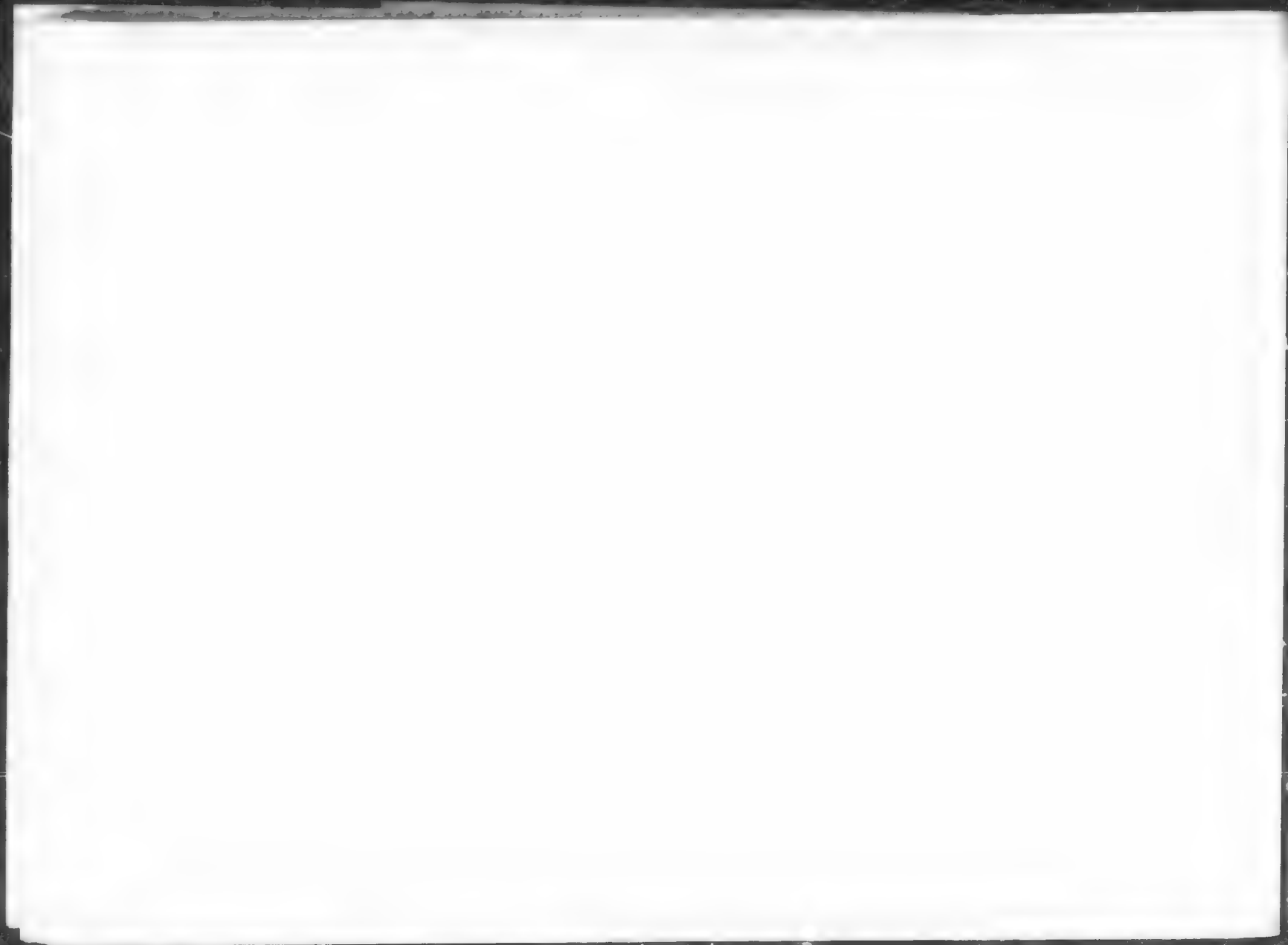
'Twas in vain that Smith said he expected a pile,
 As his Uncle, out West, was then boring for *it*.

'Twas folly to bluster; 't was idle to kneel;

'Twas useless to threaten revolver or steel;

For his prospects were certain'y down at the heel.

And plainly he saw, or he could n't see far,



That money is more than the news of war !
 He must brace up his mind for a final endeavor,
 As tho' he might say to himself, "Now, or never."
 But work, in the primitive sense of the word,
 Appeared to his reason as simply absurd.
 To borrow, of course, he could scarcely pretend ;
 For, strange to relate, few are willing to lend
 Without some slight prospect of being repaid.
 "Alas !" sigh'd poor Smith, "must I lose thee,
 sweet maid ?"

He consulted his journal ; 't would nothing reveal,
 — Nothing but what would awaken regret
 In the heart of a man unaccustom'd to debt.
 One door was yet open : why could he not steal ?
 It matters but little ; . . . in fact, I may say
 That to steal is consider'd a business-like way,
 And one of the popular modes of the day ! —
 That is, if you dext'rously make a large haul ;
 But a fig for your chance, if your plunder be small.
 Go in for a million, or nothing at all !
 A very small rascal we simply despise ;
 But a great defalcator is praised to the skies :
 We call him a villain, 't is true ; but at heart,
 We envy the fellow for being so smart !
 All of which, I am sorry to say, goes to show

That the standard of popular honor is low.
 So Smith cast about for the way he might claim
 Some ten thousand dollars, — no more ;
 And he did it by simply signing the name
 Of a party who kept the next door !
 Alas ! gentle reader, how little we think
 Of the mischief that 's made with a penful of ink !
 For Smith, the poor simpleton, ever must rue it,
 Because he was timid. Why did n't he do it
 On a scale more sublime . . . say fifty-times ten ?
 What then ? you demand. I'll tell you what then :
 That instead of inflicting judicial correction,
 We'd have him divide, and secure his protection
 From justice, or anything worse than detection.
 We dare not imprison a man of such "parts,"
 Who could dignify theft to the rank of fine arts :
 A genius so smart must be worth elevation ;
 No doubt he could pay off the debt of the nation !
 He could . . . by the method call'd Repudiation —
 A method that every true patriot leaves
 To be counsel'd by cut-throats and practised by
 thieves.
 To rob on the highway cost Sandy his pate ;
 To rob twenty kingdoms made Sandy the Great :
 'T was "noble ambition" made this one a chief,



"Twas "infamous greed" made the other a thief!
 And yet, in both rascals one purpose we see:
 In kind they are equals if not in degree.
 So Smith to the prison was justly convey'd;
 For Smith made a miss, and of course, miss'd a
 maid.

Tom Flicker was married in elegant style,
 With white-kidded ushers parading the aisle
 Of the dim-lighted church, the organ the while
 A-striving and moaning and growling and groaning
 To smother the service the priest was intoning.
 The shod-de-la-shoddy were present, — those who
 May paint on their 'scutcheons a fish or a shoe;
 For the bride was an heiress; at least, so 'twas said
 She should be when her uncle in India were dead,
 And as he had, happily, many complaints,
 It was safe to infer very soon with the saints
 He 'd be number'd, — though scarcely a saint in
 his living:

(But, then, to the wealthy we must be forgiving:
 "Sweet sinners," sometimes, it is well to keep
 track of,

Or both Church and State might collapse for the
 lack of!)

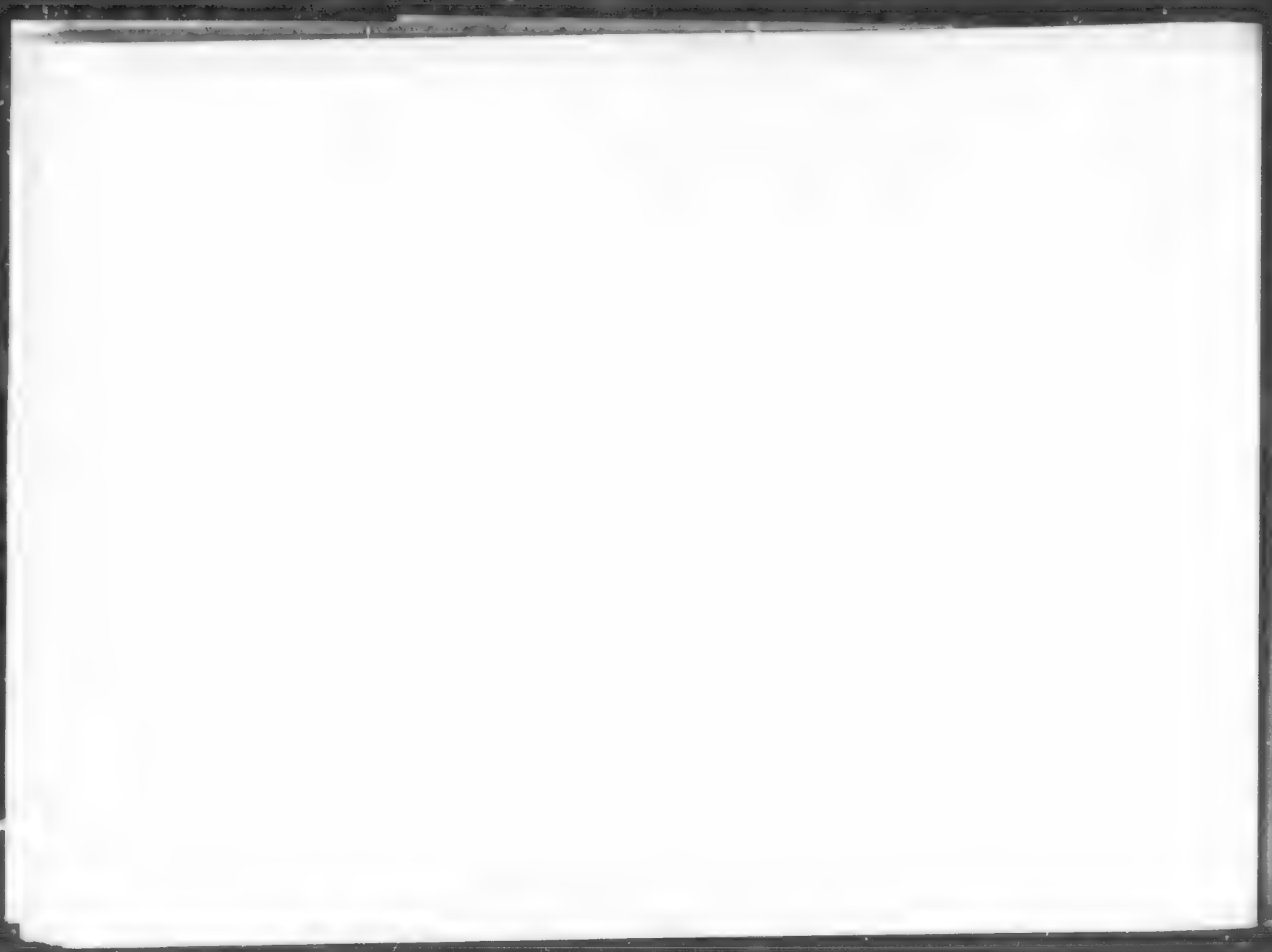
The wedding went off *comme il faut*, let me say,
 And the ladies declared 't was as good as a play.
 But, by-and-by, came in the men for their pay,
 With plaguy long bills in their hands, — which,
 indeed,

Is a literature not very pleasing to read, —

That is, if you owe

Much more than you're able to manage, you
 know.

Tom lived at the rate of ten thousand a year,
 In an elegant mansion on Commonwealth Square.
 'Twas just after breakfast, and Tom and his wife
 Were calmly enjoying the comforts of life, —
 A fragrant cigar; — that is, Flicker, of course;
 The last magazine and the latest divorce,
 A fresh bit of scandal (now, Lulu, I mean),
 With a psalm or a symphony sandwich'd between.
 Rare objects of virtu and volumes well bound
 And pictures and bric-a-brac scatter'd around,
 And so forth and so on. Tom drew from his poke
 A bundle of bills, and thus laughingly spoke,
 As he toss'd them to Lulu, "My love, I suppose,
 We must draw on the stocking to liquidate those."
 "My stars! what a budget!" cries Lulu; "but
 where



Is the bulk of your money invested, my dear?"

"My money?" yawn'd Flicker, with some hesitation;

"Hum. . . fact 't is invested all over creation."

"Why! what do you mean, Mr. Flicker, — in land?"

That 's foolish, I think. What have you on hand?"

"On hand? . . . let me see: here's a ring worth a dollar, —

You think it is gold, Lu, because it is yoller;

'T is n' hing but oroide, — so is your locket."

"Now, Flicker, what nonsense! what have you in pocket?"

"In pocket, you say? Here 's a five-dollar bill

That I poker'd from Honeypole, up on the Hill;

And here 's an old quarter and five cents in cash;

And that is the whole of my lucre, or 'trash,'

As Shakespeare denominates money, though he

Was a thrifty old fellow, the critics agree."

"The critics!" she scream'd; "the critics be shot!

Do you mean to say, Flicker, that *that's* all you've got?"

Now, Lulu, don't stare with those pretty eyes!

I expect to have more when that old uncle dies."

"That uncle! what uncle?" "The India one."

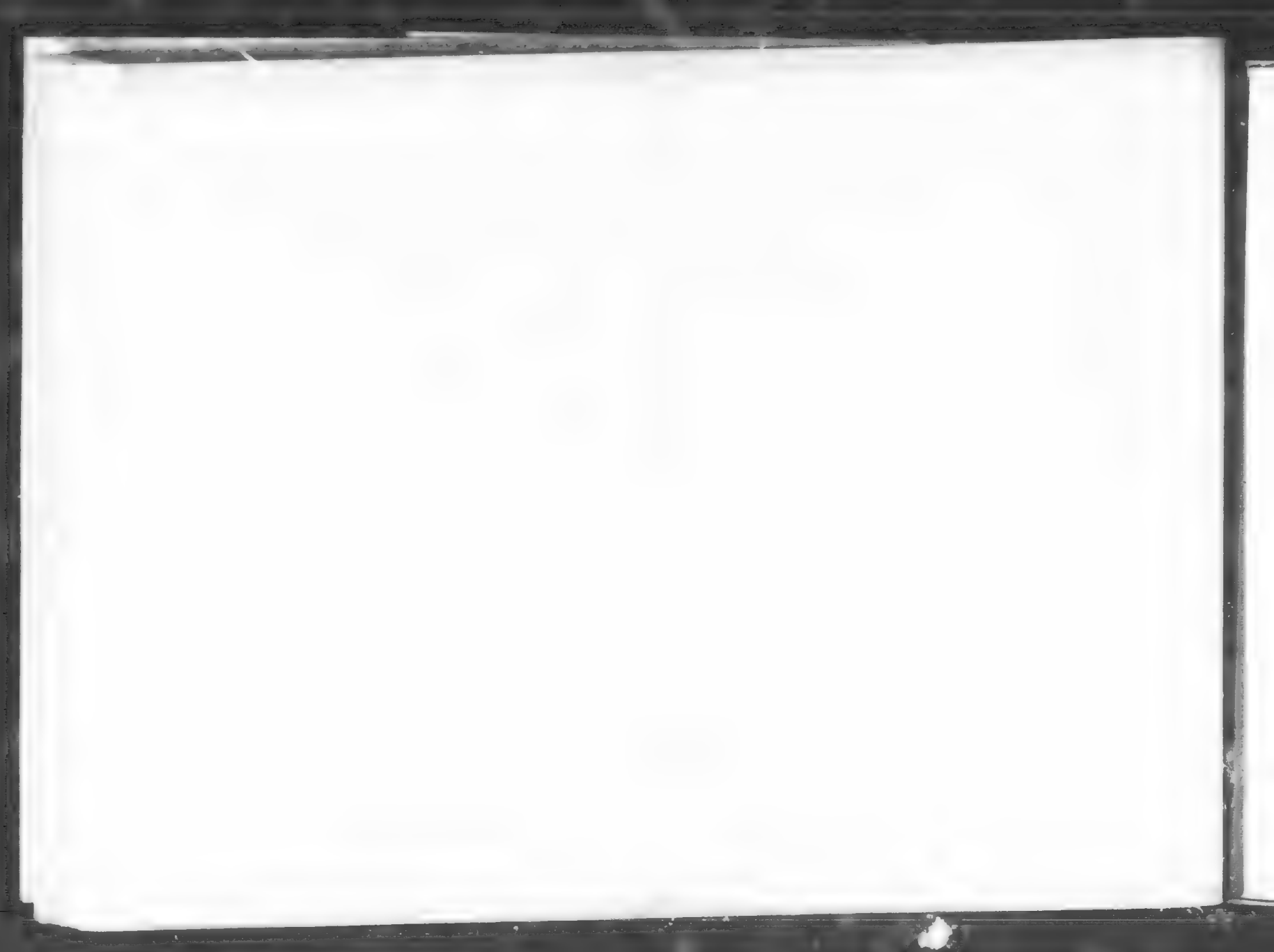
"He's only a fiction!" "Then, we are undone,
And possess not a picayune under the sun!" . . .

One morning I pass'd by their house, in the wet,
And I saw in the window, "For Sale or To Let."
For Flicker, made fractious at hearing her jaw go,
Went straight to the dog and at last to Chicago!

Now let me relate you the story of Jones,
Whose success for the others' misfortunes atones;
For Jones, be it known, gain'd his object in life,
The dream of his youth, when he gain'd a rich
wife.

Now, Jones was a boaster in very loud tones, —
The world was created expressly for Jones!
He boasted of all that he did and he had,
And even his bad was a wonderful bad!
He talk'd about Marriage as merchants of trade,
As a very poor "spec." if no money be made.
"'T is the short road to wealth, Sir; in fact, 't is
to seize

Upon Fortune without all the worry and tease
Of a long life of toil; 't is to sink into ease,
As into your chair, Sir, whenever you please.
But as for your beauty, affection, and trash! —
The key to the heart is the key to the cash!



When I capture my gal, Sir, with plenty of tin,
 She may love me or loathe me, — I care not a pin !
 Of course I must put on the spoonery at first :
 'My dearest ! my angel ! my bosom will burst !
 Oh, love you ? Just try me, and then you shall
 see.

Why, I'd jump in the fire, I'd plunge in the sea ;
 Anything, everything, sweetest, for thee !
 My hook I should bait with such sentiments fine,
 And see, pretty soon, on the end of my line
 A plump little damsel teetotally mine ! "

So Jones went a-fishing ; and managed one day
 To hook a young Minnie from out of the spray
 Of rocky Nahant, and then scamper away.

. Her papa was enraged !
 But, after a while, were his feelings assuaged ;
 So he gave them a mansion, and bade them be
 caged, —

Which they did, you may trust, with but little
 evasion,

And lived like two doves of the turtle persuasion.

Ah ! did they ? Hum ! no, miss ; not quite, I
 opine ;

For Jones found a shark on the end of his line !
 And he found to his sorrow, and so did his wife,

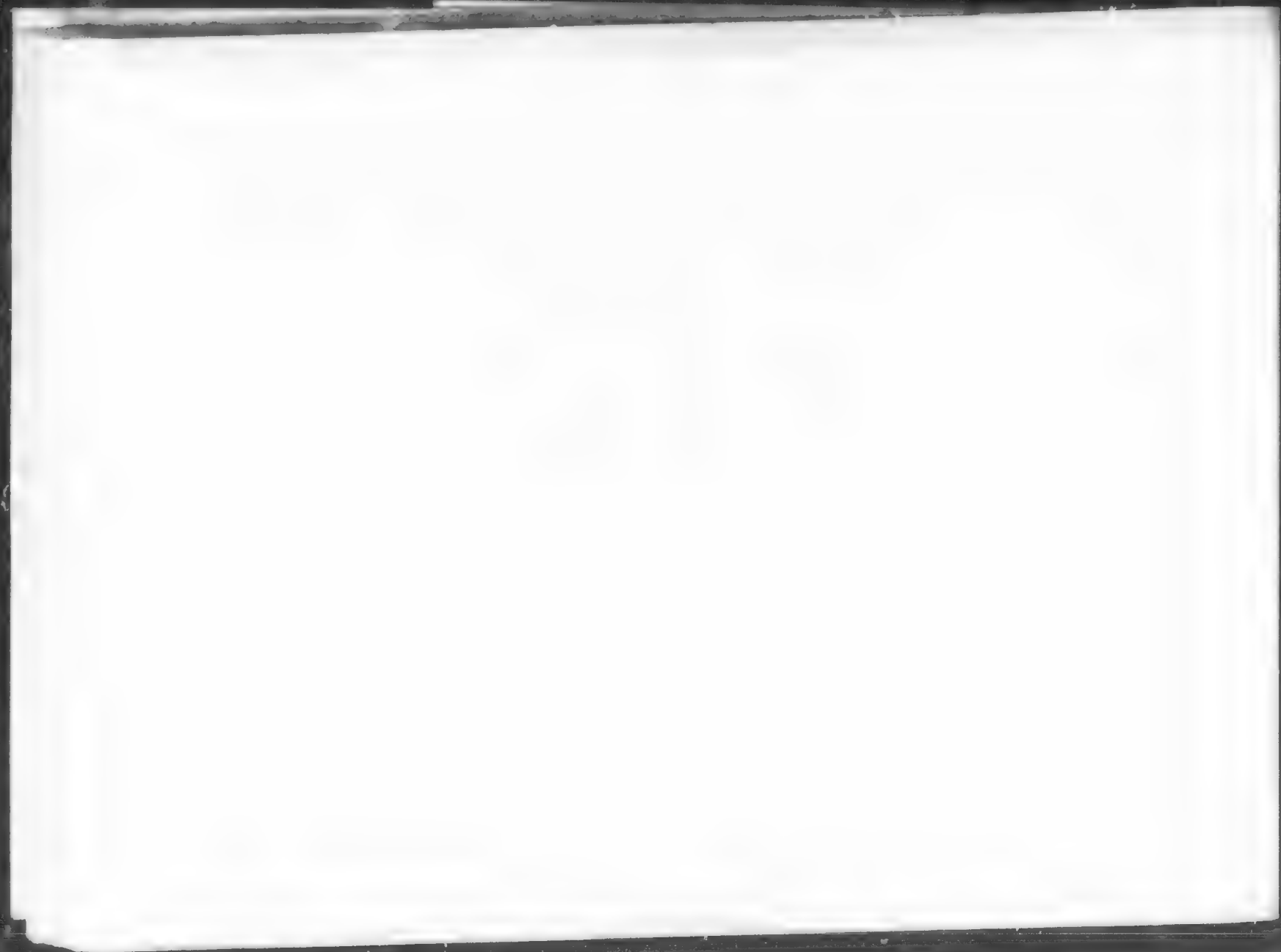
That money's not all that is needed in life :
 Their tastes, their desires, their habits opposed,
 The gates of their hearts to each other were closed,
 And 'twas plain by their words, full of hitches
 and twitches,

That Jones was a slave and his wife wore the keys
 That unlock'd the strong box that contain'd all
 the riches ;

And so when at home he was down on his knees.
 Jones was a man when abroad he would roam ;
 But he shrank to a child as he drew nearer home.
 When abroad, he'd expand like a parachute
 rocket ;

At home, he was popp'd in her ladyship's pocket.
 Whate'er he proposed she would never agree to ;
 Her will was his law, and she veto'd his veto.
 As neither was saint, why, they quarrel'd of course,
 And sued, pretty soon, for the usual divorce.
 Mrs. J. is now leader in fashion and dress,
 Not as plain Mrs. Jones, but as Madam Jones.
 And Jones ? you inquire. He follow'd the rest,
 And his fame, like the sun, has gone down in the
 West !

But this much we know : without labor or strife,
 He really attain'd his great object in life.



If it brought not that comfort, that pleasure,
that ease,

That "have what you want" and that "go
where you please;"

Why, the fault was not his, 't was the fault of his
wife.

He expected to soar to a marvellous height:
He did, — as a tail that is tagg'd to a kite;
But when the string broke, poor Jones got a fall,
And away went money and wifey and all!

Now, the moral is this: If you mean to grow
rich,

Go delve in a coal-mine or dig in a ditch;
Go raising potatoes, or onions, or beet;
Go edit a paper or beg on the street;
Be a doctor, a butcher, a banker, a teacher,
A lawyer, a barber, a poet, a preacher;
Go lobby at Congress, and crawl on your knees
For a government office, or do what you please, —
Try any pursuit; — but do n't, for your life,
If you seek an exemption from worry and strife,
If you wish all your days to be tranquil and sunny,
Don't refuse a fair lady because she has money!

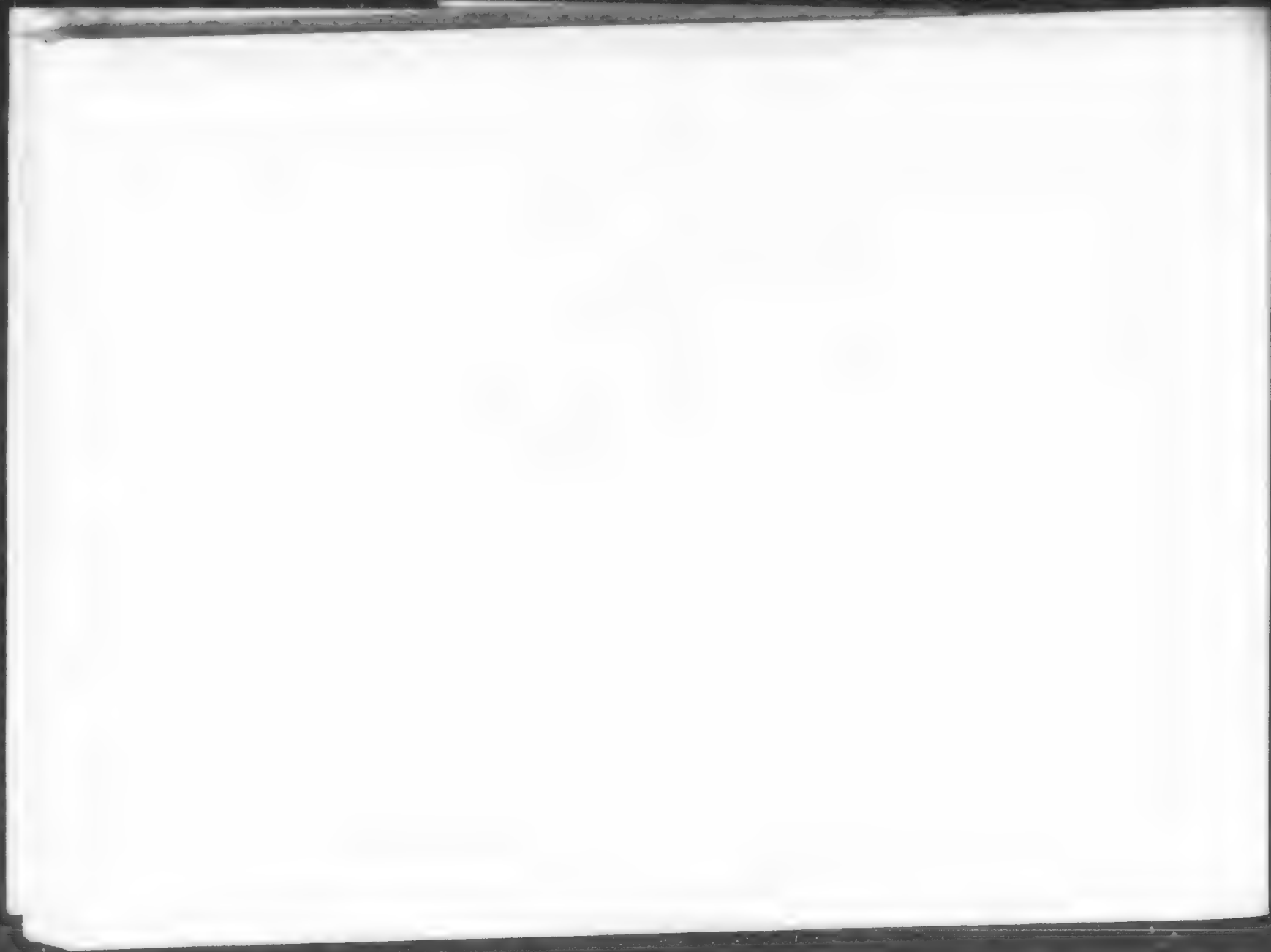
THE FIRST MOUSTACHE.

MEN laugh at the ladies and say they are vain,
With a passion for show which they cannot
restrain; —

'T is my candid belief, tho' to say it were treason,
That men are more vain with a tenth of the reason.
You remember poor Fledgeby, in Dickens's book,
Who did in the looking-glass hourly look,
And how he'd exult could he only find there
A strange-looking pimple that promised a hair!
A black, bushy whisker! ah! that was his aim, —
His object in life, and the soul of his fame!
We call this a fiction; but Dickens's wit
Made the cap of poor Fledgeby for thousands a fit.
Aye, thousands, like Fledgeby, spend labor and
cash

To nurture a whisker or train a moustache, —
Both something worth having, of course, if you
can;

But scarce to be deem'd the whole duty of Man!
Yet, hair, dead or living, is now such a rage

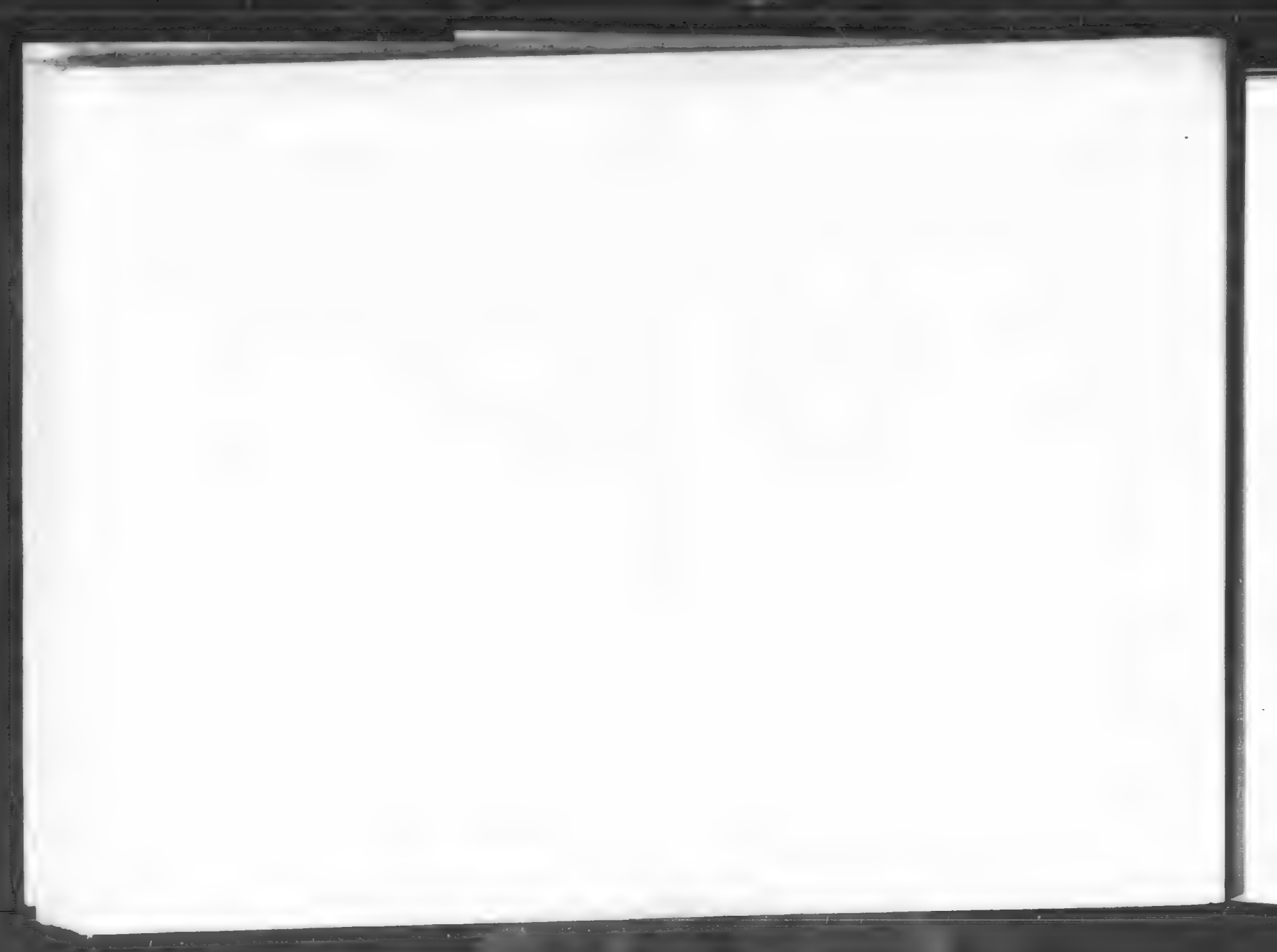


That this may be term'd the Capillary Age.
 I regret it, because, I must tell you, that I
 To raise a moustache did once faithfully try!
 'Twas the first faint attempt in the day of small
 things,

When man like a gosling first flutters his wings
 In feeble endeavors, till, strengthen'd by use,
 He rises sublimely — a full-feather'd . . . gander!
 You may as well be out of the world as the fashion,
 Since every great genius now has a moustache on.
 If I can't like the Laureate write a great lay, sir,
 Like him, I can scorn both the comb and the razor.
 Nay, even the dullest of mortals may find you
 A reason for doing whate'er he's inclined to.
 And so the mou tache may be good for the eyes,
 A way to save time, or to keep out the flies,
 A fine respirator, a change for the better; . . .
 Why, Nature demands it! Then, certainly, let her
 Just have her own way, I concluded; and so
 Whatever would grow, why, I did let it grow.
 In a week, such a change in my presence was
 wrought,
 That, already, I look'd quite distingue, I thought.
 You know what it is to be self-satisfied? —
 To march down the street with imperial stride?

To fancy you're making a mighty sensation, —
 The heir of the ages — the hope of the nation?
 You know what it is to be self-satisfied.
 Well, that's how I felt for a month, till my pride
 One day had a fall. I was moving down town
 That horrible morning, when who should I meet,
 Just fresh from the barber's, all oily and sweet
 As a roll of June butter, but Bachelor Brown!
 Thought I to myself, as I chuckled with glee,
 "How amazed and delighted the fellow will be!
 He scarcely will know me, I'm certain of that!"
 And I gave my moustache an encouraging pat.
 So we met face to face, when Brown in surprise
 Drew back and survey'd me with saucer-like eyes.
 Said he — (he was one of those *plain-spoken* men;
 But, indeed, I have ever disliked him since then)
 Said he, in a way that my visions did scatter:
 "Why, merciful Powers! what can be the matter!
 You're as pale as a parsnip! as thin as a platter!
 You study too much, Sir. Now, why do you do
 so?"

You look as neglected as Robinson Crusoe!
 For pity sake, give up your doggerel and books!
 There's Death-on-a-cream-color'd-horse in your
 looks!



'The worms, Sir, the worms you will soon be
among, —
One would think you 're about to be married or
hung !
And, then, you 're not wash'd : there are traces
of hash
Or mush on your lip, Sir, or some other trash."

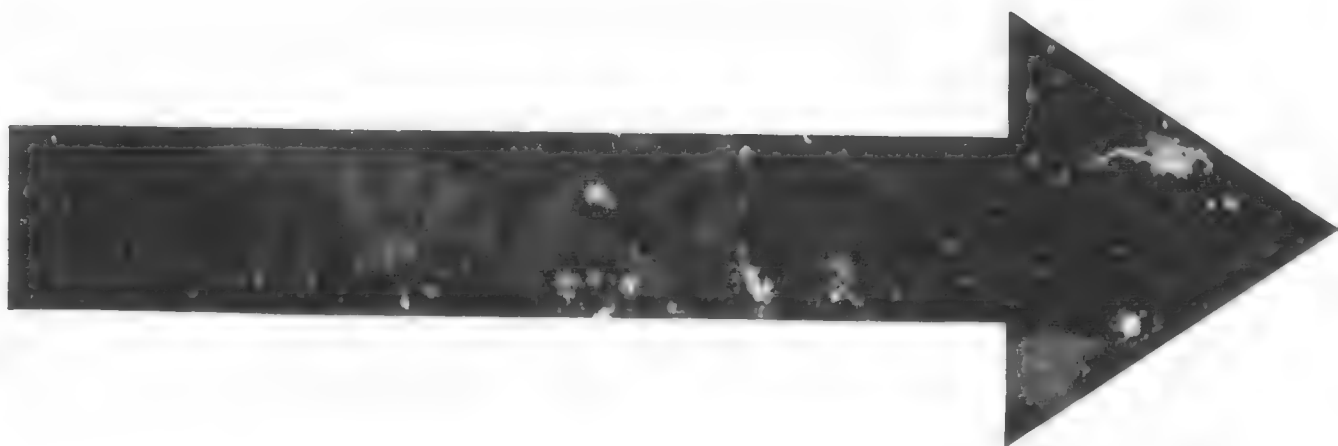
Oh, how did my vanity fall with a smash !
I could hardly reply in the midst of the crash,
"Why, Brown, are you crazy? — why, *that's* my
moustache !"

.
'Twas enough. I went home, and with little
delay,
The whole institution — I scraped it away ;
And, indeed, on the blade, as I held it to view,
It look'd like the mould that adorns an old shoe.

* * *

ARETHUSA.

ON the street where I live — a very fair street, —
A very fair lady I often did meet :
As often, at least, as a very fair day
Might tempt her from home o'er the city to stray.
(I use the word stray for the rhyme, let me say ;
So you 'll not misinterpret my meaning, I pray.
She stray'd to see pictures, and fashion, and
friends ;
She stray'd for her wealth,
To dispose of her wealth,
And various other commendable ends, —
To see and be seen. . . .
You know what I mean ;
In fact, 't was a physiological stray,
Such as scores of young ladies take every day.)
Now, Miss Arethusa, for that was her name,
Was enough to set anyone's heart in a flame ;
For a lovelier face or a handsomer form
Never took a poor bachelor's bosom by storm !
And ne'er through a crowd did she airily float,



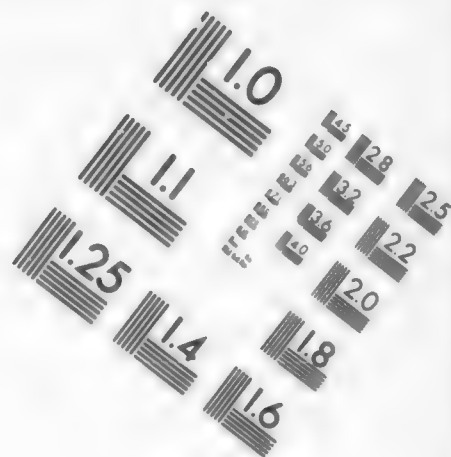
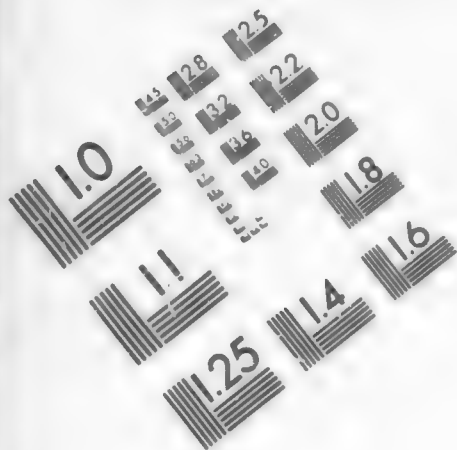
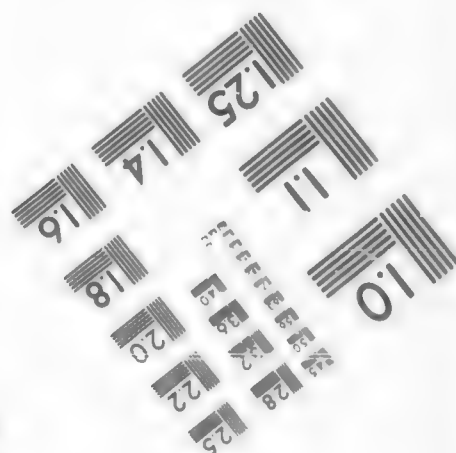
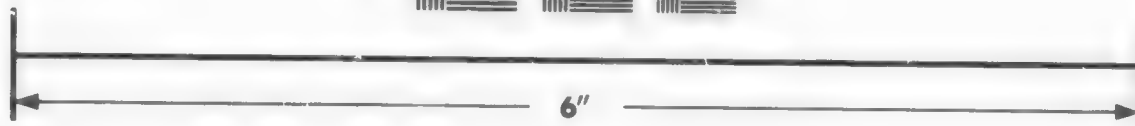
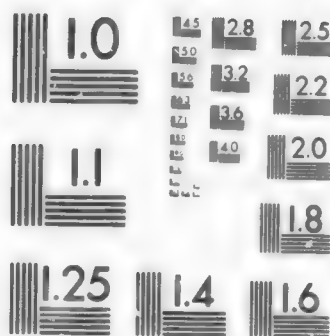


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But scores of observers her beauties would note,
Some lauded her eyes so melting and sweet;
And some, when 't was muddy, fell down at her
feet;

Some glanced at her lips, and straight for a season
Betray'd every symptom of absence of reason!
All sounded her praises, and I must confess
That even the ladies commended her dress!
Well, the house that she lived in was house No. 9,
No. 7, the residence honor'd as mine:
So we were near neighbors; but here is the joke,
You'll scarcely believe it, we never once spoke;
Tho' times without number, I own, with a sigh,
I've stepp'd in the gutter to let her pass by,
While never so much as a glance of her eye
Betray'd that she dreamt any mortal was nigh!
That fair Arethusa was haughty or proud
Is far from my purpose to utter;
'Twas the sweep of her garments, it must be
avow'd,
That brush'd me so oft in the gutter;
But I was so bashful, and she was so nice,
That neither once ventured to fracture the ice.
Moreover, true gallantry made me defer
All my rational rights in the sidewalk to her.

In fact, I was waiting my zeal to display
In some very romantic, remarkable way:
For instance, to seize a wild horse on which she,
All dangling and screaming, might happen to be;
To snatch her from fire or water; to throw
My coat o'er a puddle as Raleigh, you know,
Once did to protect Queen Elizabeth's toe!
(But that was an age when the ladies, I think,
Were much more secluded and guarded, and when
Their cheeks would assume a most beautiful pink,
If aware of the gazes of two or three men:
Content to be women — the Vestals of Home, —
They seldom in search of adventure did roam;
Their rambles in public were fewer, no doubt,
And mostly their mothers knew when they were
out.

For a man to go coating the dirt now-a-days, he
Would soon be a pauper, if not with the crazy!
'T would use up one's wardrobe so fast that a body
Must fall back on fig-leaves or flutter in shoddy!)
But hold; I am rambling quite out of my bound.
I loved Arethusa; but love had its wound.

'T was twelve months ago, on a very cold day,
I was tramping as usual the old beaten way,
When what should I see betwixt me and the sun,



But something that look'd like — you'll think I'm
in fun —

That horrible object that everyone knows
Is placed in the garden to scare off the crows!
I adjusted my glasses and gazed at the Thing,
Expecting each moment 't would come with a
spring

At my throat! — such a terrible sight
Would scare one to death if encounter'd by night!
As it was, I knew not if 't were bestial or human:
'T was surely no man, it was hardly a woman!
Ungainly and awkward, it shuffled about, —
Its ogreish garments flapp'd in and flopp'd out!
"What ho! Is 't a witch, or an imp, or a ghoul?
Or the Museum mummy broke loose on a stroll?
A nightmare by daylight? a Thing of the brain?
(Pah! . . . never eat lobster for supper again!)
O Mercy! no nearer! Hence, horrible creature!"
Was just on my tongue, when mine eye caught a
feature

That banish'd my passion as well as alarms;
For alas 't was the once-adored bundle of charms:
'T was the fair Arethusa herself, all the while,
Disguised in the latest Parisian style!

Sir Norman of the Vale.

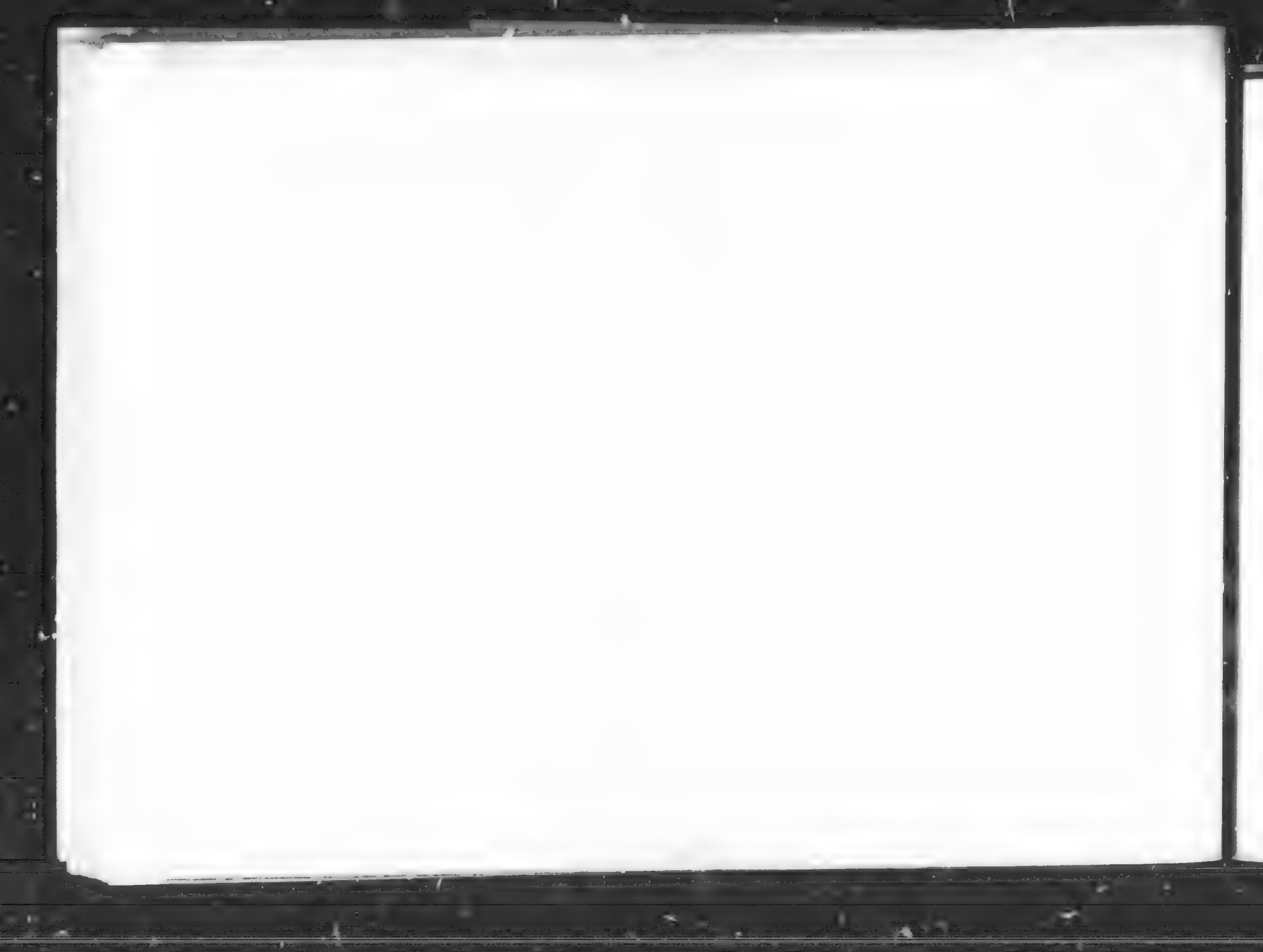




SIR NORMAN OF THE VALE.

A DIM, deep Vale with shimmering sunset fill'd,
Soft purple haze, and shafts of golden light ;
On either hand, broad belts of verdure spread,
Where kingly trees, with all their tall tops crown'd
With quivering splendor, seem to meditate
And sigh in solemn chorals, sad and low.
Far off the river winds, and farther still,
Upon the farthest verge, the silvery gleam
Of ocean ever calm, while over all
Broods undisturb'd repose. Save yon gray towers,
As fix'd and silent as their craggy base,
It seems a wilderness untrod, unknown.

And yet, not so : along these lofty aisles
We trace a footworn pathway o'er the turf, —
The rude, expressive signature of man ;
And as we penetrate the deep'ning gloom,
With every sense to sight or sound alert,



Strange whispers greet us from the knotted trunks,
 Brown leaves take wing, and twisted roots start up
 And wriggle out of sight among the ferns;
 Weird brambles twitch us with their elfish claws,
 And unseen hands drop acorns at our feet!
 For thus doth Mystery, with her magic touch,
 People the wild and crowd with curious eyes
 The shadowy wood. The still and sultry air
 Is dense with balmy sweets of gum and flower,
 Of last year's faded wreath and russet robe.
 Sudden we burst upon a grassy glade,
 A weed-grown garden, and a vassal's cot,
 Whose open door invites our pilgrim feet.

Alas, another guest's expected here!
 The poor life-weary Forester awaits
 The icy touch of death to set him free.
 His wither'd hand a fair young maiden chafes,
 And in mute anguish gazes on his brow,
 As though in every line she read her fate.

This maid is Ethel, daughter of an earl,
 That in her budding infancy was snatch'd
 By gipsy prowlers from her drowsy nurse,
 And swiftly borne beyond the father's ken;
 And neither bribe, nor threat, nor solemn curse

Could ever bring her to his arms again.
 So when no tidings came — no track, no trace —
 Through many a waning moon, the widow'd man
 Sought death in battle's front, since life to him,
 With all his wealth and titles, power and fame,
 Was torture without her. One day that band
 Of swart and lawless wanderers encamp'd
 Beneath the shadow of Sir Norman's oaks,
 And nigh the river's rim, and Ethel's feet
 Incautious wander'd far into the wood;
 When, lo, she met the vassal and his son, —
 The youngest of five lads, — who, Edgar named,
 Was now his Benjamin. The girl's fair locks
 And innocent blue eyes, the old man judged,
 Mark'd not the offspring of the gipsy race;
 But, questing her, none other source she knew.
 "I doubt not," said the father to the lad,
 "This is the lost child of the fallen Earl;
 We will conceal her safe, and cast her cloak
 Beside the river margent, so the band
 Will deem her drown'd; and then we will arise
 And chase the vagrant robbers from the grove."
 So they, with tender-loving hands, convey'd
 The gentle wand'rer to their humble roof,
 And hid her till the camp was broken up.



Now, Ethel was beloved by all, — by Edgar
 More than all — the tend'rest tie was theirs ;
 But cruel wars arose, and one by one
 The Forester's strong sons were swept away
 Upon the crimson flood, until not one
 Is left ; for Edgar has been three years gone
 With brave Sir Norman to the Holy Land,
 And never a message came to tell his fate ;
 But now Death comes, with separating hand,
 When Ethel, stripp'd of all on earth she loves,
 Twice-orphan'd, must go forth without a friend !

But hark ! what means that trill of music sweet,
 Now rising, failing, faint and far away,
 As when the Zephyrs touch the trembling cord ?
 It seems some distant hunter's silver horn ;
 And Ethel's ear is quick to catch the sound. —
 With wond'ring eyes and pallid cheek, she hears
 The tremulous soft tones. Oh, much they speak
 To any list'ning ear of ended strife,
 Of home-returning ranks, of foes subdued,
 Of conquest and dominion, power and spoil !
 But she — one question only would she ask,
 Which answer'd true, the rest to her is naught —
 More empty than the bubbles on the brook !

"What hear you, daughter?" moans the dying
 man.

"Death comes with silent paces: ere we know,
 In at the gate he glides, and strikes the blow !
 You start ; you stare ; you list with bated breath :
 Fear not, my child ; for me alone comes Death."
 "Comes life !" she cries : "O father, can it be
 A trumpet-call !"

"Nay ! hearest thou the tramp,
 And I not hear, who have most cause to hear ?
 For me it calls."

"Oh no: 't is Norman's horn !
 That silver trumpet, whose imperious call
 Wakes up the drowsy warder on the wall,
 Unfurls the banner, gives the bell a voice,
 Quickens each foot, and bids all hearts rejoice !
 Sir Norman's horn !"

"Nay, daughter, nay, — not yet ;
 'T is some lone woodbird piping for her mate."
 "My father, no. Sir Norman's horn it is !
 Hear now ! . . . the great bell of the castle swings,
 And 't is a round, glad hour from curfew-time.
 Oh, many a bird this night will have her mate !"
 "Lift, lift me up, my ever-gentle child,
 My daughter in all virtues but in blood ;



Prop my poor head, that I may lose no note,
No whisper of that horn. Draw back the blind;
Let in God's blessed air and the sweet breath
Of kine and flowers and trees,—my poor old
trees! . . .

Oh, but now grand they look: so tall and strong!
God bless them all!"

"There! hear you now the horn?"

"Aye, every trill I hear. It brings fresh life,
Like Spring's first lark. O Ethel, in my day,
A merry day were this; but now who lives?
Who stirs? . . . Fetch me my hose and coat."

"Your coat!"

"Nay, but my shroud, my shroud! How doth
this pipe

Bewitch away my wits! I did not dream
To hear it evermore. That my old heart
Should beat life's march so long, who could have
hoped?

Good Lord, I thank thee that my poor old eyes
May see my boy again! I shall not die unwept,
With all my mourners buried ere myself;
For I did sorely fear there might be none
To close my filmy lids or drop from theirs
A tear upon my turf. 'Tis pitiful

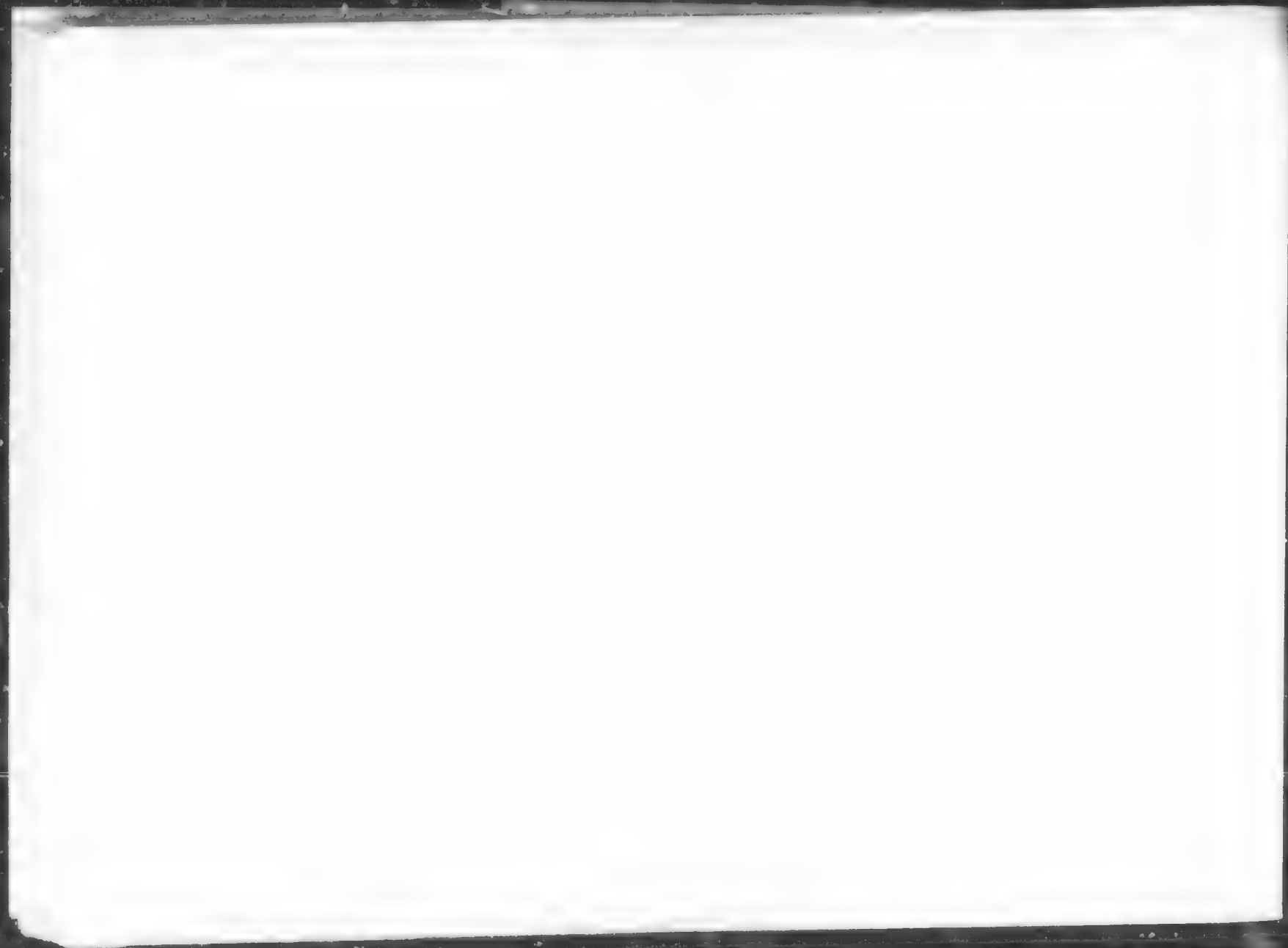
For one who hath held children on his knee
To die alone."

"My father, where am I?"

"In my heart's core, my sweet; but oh, my sons!
Ethel, my sons!" . . .

So did he sadly mourn,
Upheld within the maiden's tremulous arms,
Till faint and far the music died away.
Then, grasping Ethel's hands, a strange, wild light
Kindled his faded eyes, and all his frame
Shook like a shatter'd oak that strains and groans,
Struggling against the tempest and the flood,
While thus he spake to her: "Ethel, my child,
The daylight fails: night comes apace, and rest.
The past is past: for thee the future smiles.
God keep thee as the apple of his eye!
I may not be awake to greet my boy;
But, ere I sleep, I somewhat have to say,
Which doth concern thee much. Great change
will come

O'er all this goodly land ere yet thou bear
The silver crown of age upon thy brow:
I hear the breathings of the pitiless storm
That soon must rend this wood. With Norman
dies,

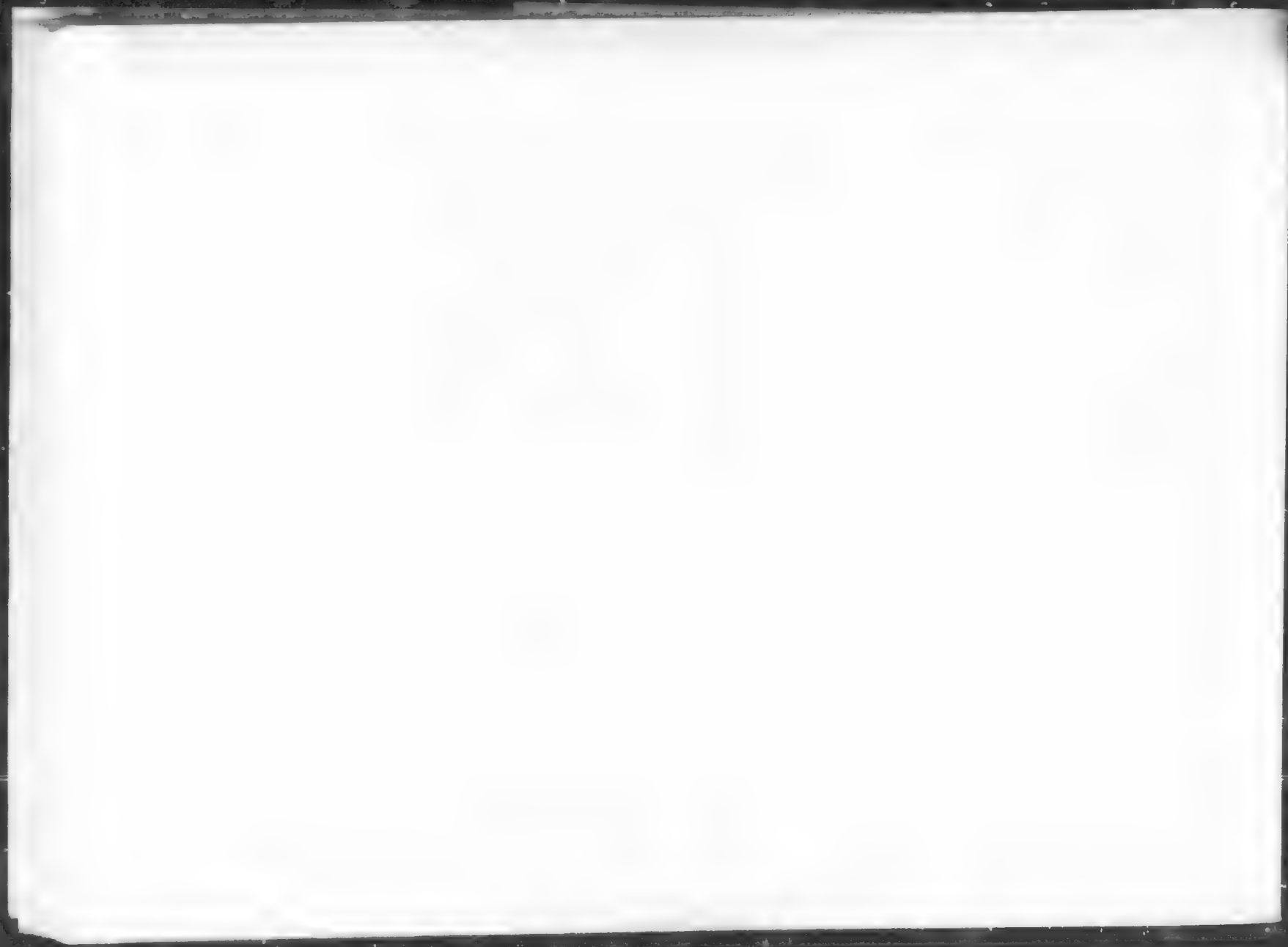


When he shall die, a race of mighty men,
 Who have, through generations, held the rule,
 So claim'd, by right divine, — we having none,
 Except to serve, — obedience all our right.
 But there will come a change, as I have said, —
 Whether for evil or for good, God wot ; —
 For, daughter, I have noted long the growth
 Of lordly trees as well as lowly weeds :
 I've mark'd how they do sprout, put forth and die ;
 And so with beast and bird and creeping thing, —
 All things of earthly mould, both high and low :
 Each hath its time, and then yields up its room
 To other occupant : nothing abides.
 But either runs or rots. A change will come ;
 I know not what ; but when the leaves are sere,
 Is winter nigh. The dead past shrivel'd up,
 The threadbare garments of Old Custom soon
 Become a motley jest ; and holy rites,
 Sweet manners, gentle usages, and deeds
 Of knightly pith be seen no more.
 And then, I fear me, will the ties that bind
 The nation like a tree from tap to top, —
 Sire to son, subject to suzerain lord,
 Pastor to people, — be dissolved like snow
 I' the sun's eye ; while, in that upstart time,

Will honor, virtue, reverence, and truth
 Rot at the core. . . . But now impatient Death
 Tugs at my skirts, and bids me gather up
 My few last words. Sir Norman hath no heir, —
 Mark well, my child, — no heir to follow him ;
 And whose may be this land, when he shall quit,
 Comes not within my judgment nor my hope.
 But this much, Ethel, did I yearn to see, —
 Leaving the issue i' the heart of God, —
 If Heaven hath led my Edgar back to me,
 That thou and he be wed, so what may come,
 To each alike may come."

"What ! Edgar wed ?"

"This grafting I did purpose ; but, my child,
 Such may not sprout : for thou'rt the lily fair
 And he the weed. Yet sometimes think of him ;
 Ah, think of him sometimes, poor churl, when thou
 Shalt blossom forth the Lily of the Vale !
 For that he loved thee well, I well do know ;
 And you did call him brother — loved him, too,
 And were indeed as one until this day.
 Then, if thou mayst some gracious favor show,
 Or lighten by a link the vassal-chain,
 So do, so do, and thou shalt have reward." . . .
 "(O Heaven, the fatal sign ! Sweet Reason quits



Her crumbling tenement, and leaves his mind
The sport of fantasy!) . . . My father, what?
Wed Edgar, my own brother and my blood!
Edgar?"

"Nay, good my child; not so, not so:
Thy brother; not thy blood. Not to this trunk
Did ever such fair fruitage owe its bloom.
The crimson life that dances in thy veins
Is alien to this soil. But thou shalt know
More fully by-and-by. . . . I was to blame
In letting thee so root in my poor heart,
And bind thy tendrils round me; but they pluck'd
My fruit, my blooming branches, my sweet boys!
And, year by year, I thought to yield thee up;
But, year by year, I less could yield thee up,
As more and more you wrapt me round and round,
And made all bloom where barrenness had been."
"My father! oh, how strange! Why yield me up?
To whom yield up?"

"Nay, time serves not to tell!
But thou, ere many days, shalt know it all. . . .
I could not yield thee up. But I was wrong.
I did thee cruel wrong; so when I sleep,
I would that thou to Lady Mabel go, —
Sir Norman's gentle spouse and thy true aunt, —"

"My aunt!"

"Aye, child; thy mother's sister, she; —
And bear this voucher, which a clerk did write,
And my teeth bite, wherein is truly told
How thou wast found, how shelter'd many a year,
And who thou art, that I may hope for grace.
This do; the rest will come as Heaven direct.
And now I've said, so lay me gently down,
That I may sleep awhile; for I am weak —
Sore weary, needing rest. God bless thee, child!
Wake me when Edgar come, — my little boy."

With folded hands, and eyes like violets
Dew-bathed, sat Ethel, lost in thought, —
Her brow upturn'd to the slow-deep'ning blue.
Around her, as an aureole, the light
Fell tenderly, while through her parted lips
There seem'd to breathe a prayer. Oh, who may
guess

What wonder-visions visited her soul!
What fragrant memories! what hopes! what fears!
What questionings that never may be solved!
She seem'd as one awaken'd from a dream;
Yet doubtful if indeed it be a dream. . . .
But when she look'd upon that face again,
'T was still, and cold, and dumb: she was alone.



Home from the wars again, trill lala tra lala!

Home from the wars again, tra lala trill!

Lady fair, lady-love, rise up to meet us!

Rosy lip, azure eye, open to greet us!

Home from the wars again, tra lala trill!

Home from the wars again, trill lala tra lala!

Home from the wars again, tra lala trill!

*Fill the bowl, shout the song: we shall have
pleasure!*

Love, wine, and minstrelsy flow without measure!

Home from the wars again, tra lala trill!

Lone, silent, sad, Sir Norman moved along,
And curb'd his charger with a nerveless hand;
His dark eyes, downward gazing, fail'd to mark
The flowers that bent obeisance as he pass'd.
He seem'd as one with secret grief oppress'd,
Or sick and weary of a heartless world, —
As one who oft into the sea of life
Had dropp'd the sounding-plummet but to find
A slimy bed, where shatter'd argosies
With all their silent mariners are laid!
Yet merrily ambled his warriors behind,

Their mirth as unregarded as the flies
That fill the air with elfin melody.

For now the wars are over, and they come
With hearts full-freighted to their lady-loves,
And memories charged with many a wondrous tale
Of climes remote and regions of romance,
Where truth and fable mingle in the clouds
Of gilded dust that veil the wheels of Time.
Of wilds and phantom lakes they have to tell;
Palm groves, and cavalcades, and dusky hordes
Wrapt in the fiery mantle of the sun;
Tombs tenantless and pyramids immense, —
Mysterious piles, whose shadowy chambers mock
Th' impatient ear with mutt'rings fain' and far!
Of silent cities glimmering o'er the plain, —
Titanic bones of empires dead, unknown, —
Pale, marble ghosts of dusty dynasties!
Of whisp'ring Menmon, and the awful Sphinx,
Whose stern and stony smile doth seem to hint
Of things unutt'able and ages dim;
Of ancient Nilus, and the Middle Main,
With tombs of mighty monarchies enzoned, —
Famed regions, full of wonder and delight!
But most of all, of that most hallow'd Land
Which gave Immanuel birth, will they unfold, —



That sacred shrine, too long by paynim hands
 Possess'd, — the Holy Sepulchre! — but now,
 Through blood and treasure, rescued to the Faith,
 And much of stormy billows have they seen;
 Of shipwreck, too, among the Cyclades;
 Of weary days in watching, till appear'd
 One little mote upon the misty verge,
 That slowly swell'd into a sail, — a ship! —
 A friendly fleet to bear them to their loves!

And oh, how sweet this breath of native air,
 Fanning the dust of travel from their locks!
 These hills and vales and groves and streams —
 how fair!

What gushing music babbles in the brooks!
 These bosky dells, these flower-enamell'd fields,
 These flocks and herds and little twitt'ring birds,
 These hawthorn hedges and these dusty briers,
 These wayside weeds, these butterflies and bees!
 Sure, never did they heed these things before,
 Though born and nurtured in their very midst;
 But now, in tearful ecstasy, they kiss
 The very fringe and ravellings of Home!

But why so sad, Sir Norman? Know'st thou not
 Those queenly towers that deck yon leafy height

As with a coronal of fretted gold?
 Thrice hath the monarch of the rimy beard
 These branches stript and hung his pearls thereon,
 Since o'er thy crest they waved their verdure last;
 Death hast thou met and dash'd his point aside
 With such a brand as only Norman wields;
 Thy homeward march is one wild peal of joy,
 Where maids forget their madrigals to sing
 Your praises only, as your banners flout
 Their wide-flung casements; every favor'd street,
 With arch and wreath and rippling pennon gay,
 Roars with one shout of welcome to the brave!
 And now, Sir Knight, but wind thy bugle-horn,
 And yon gray walls will tremble with delight!
 Then will the link'd and studded portals ope
 Their folded arms to greet thee, while the draw
 Swings creaking down to span the slimy moat;
 Then will each court and corridor resound
 With hurrying footfalls and enraptured cries,
 While flutt'ring figures climb the topmost towers
 To catch the first glimpse of thy snowy plume!
 What! yet unmoved? In sooth, but that must be
 A heart of lead beneath thy golden mail!
 Thou comest again the victor as of old,
 And walk'st so high above the wond'ring world,



That Envy hangs her head in dumb despair,
 And Malice finds no mark to point her shaft;
 Yet dost thou bear thee with so mild a mien, —
 Thy glory veiling with so sweet a grace, —
 That little children dance about thy feet,
 And throw with dimpled hands their dainty kiss.
 The very trees do image forth thy deeds;
 The fountains gush thy praise; the dewy flowers,
 With cunning skill, Sir Norman of the Vale,
 Are train'd to blush thy name; the stately bird,
 Mistaking for the sun thy dazzling shield,
 Unfolds the gilded splendor of his train,
 While all the forest hails the rising morn!
 Then wherefore droop, since every heart is thine?
 We can no more; and yet so dark and dumb!
 Not thus do heroes fly to love's embrace
 And find the guerdon of their valor there.

But Norman murmurs sadly to his soul:
 "And is this all — the sum of all my life —
 These passing voices and these fading flowers?
 Men have less cause to love me than to fear;
 Then wherefore shout they 'welcome' as I pass,
 And ring their hollow flatt'ry in my ears?
 A grateful tear upon a vassal's cheek
 Were gem more lustrous to my secret soul

Than purest diamond in monarch's crown.
 I would to God that I were all they say,
 And what their lips confess, their bosoms felt!
 But oh! 't is empty, empty all, and vain,
 With self-love at the root: men's heroes are
 The magnified reflection of themselves, —
 Their own distorted shadows on the wall.
 For we that hold, in arbitrary grasp,
 Men's lives and fortunes, never reach their hearts,
 Nor know how they esteem us in their souls;
 So shallow is the homage that is paid,
 Where less than homage would be more than sin!
 There is no safety in extorted power;
 'Tis built on sand, and great must be its fall!
 In bondage to the shadow of a shade,
 'Twere better serfs were bidden to our boards,
 Than for themselves discover they are men, —
 Which one day they must find; for men they are,
 With winged thoughts that lift them to the skies,
 To soar like eagles o'er the jealous walls
 That hide the weakness of their governors. . . .
 'The *last* and *first*,' the wither'd sibyl said,
 And these two ominous words — the *first* and *last*,
 — Keep up their ceaseless echoes in my mind,
 Drowning all other sounds, both night and day!



The last I am indeed ; but how the first ?
 Ah, would that I had skill to solve that *how* !
 For, in the dark and complex web of life,
 A golden thread may run from edge to edge,
 And we not catch the glimmer till too late ! . . .
 That Heaven denied me children for some end —
 Some deed to do — 't were impious to doubt.
 So will I school my mind to scent that end,
 And do the deed, wherever it may tend ! "

Then grew Sir Norman dumb again, and seem'd
 To mingle with the shadows of the grove.

Meanwhile, the tremor of trampling hoofs,
 Tinkle of trappings, and murmur of tongues
 Come louder and louder, nearer and nearer, —
 Come with the dust-cloud dimming the tree-tops,
 Come with the silvery clangor of trumpets
 Shaking their melody over the vale —
 Quivering, caught up, and flung back from the
 towers.

See thro' the branches the gleaming of lances,
 Flashing of helmets, and flutter of plumes !
 Home from the wars again, home from the wars !
 Rings the old castle with plaudits of welcome ;
 Reels every turret with revelry wild !

*Now merrily sit, my comrades all,
 And lay the sword away ;
 Bedeck with flowers the festal hall,
 The beakers fill, the minstrels call ;
 Let every heart be gay !
 Holly, holly, holly, aha, aha, aha*

*We've put our vaunting foes to rout,
 And made the traitors swing ;
 Then push the flagon round about :
 The first that falls we'll turn him out,
 The last shall be our king !
 Holly, holly, holly, aha, aha, aha !*

*But oh ! sad thoughts of those we left
 Beneath the cypress and the palm, —
 Of sorrowing souls and hearts bereft,
 For whom there is no balm, —
 Steal in like winter's icy breath,
 When least we dream of death !
 And while we pledge the sainted slain,
 They seem to stretch their viewless hands
 Athwart the billows and the sands,
 And grasp our own again !*



Beside his grave, beneath the yew, they stand,
 Edgar and Ethel. In their features blend
 Rapture and anguish, with some subtler force
 That seems despair, as though invisible hands
 Did sunder them forever; yet entwined
 They stand, mingling their tears — utt'ring few
 words;

But those few full and deep. 'Tis that one hour
 Which comes to every soul — that fateful hour
 Whose every moment burns into the heart,
 And leaves imperishable record there
 To the last pulse, — the keystone hour of life!
 Than she no fairer ever man adored,
 Than he no worthier ever woman loved;
 And they were one from infancy to this
 Dark hour of agony beside the grave —
 This grave, which doth unite them and divide:
 She to the homage of a hundred knees,
 He to his rustic toil. But God alone
 Holds in his heart the issue of this hour, —
 This burning hour beneath the yew's deep shade!

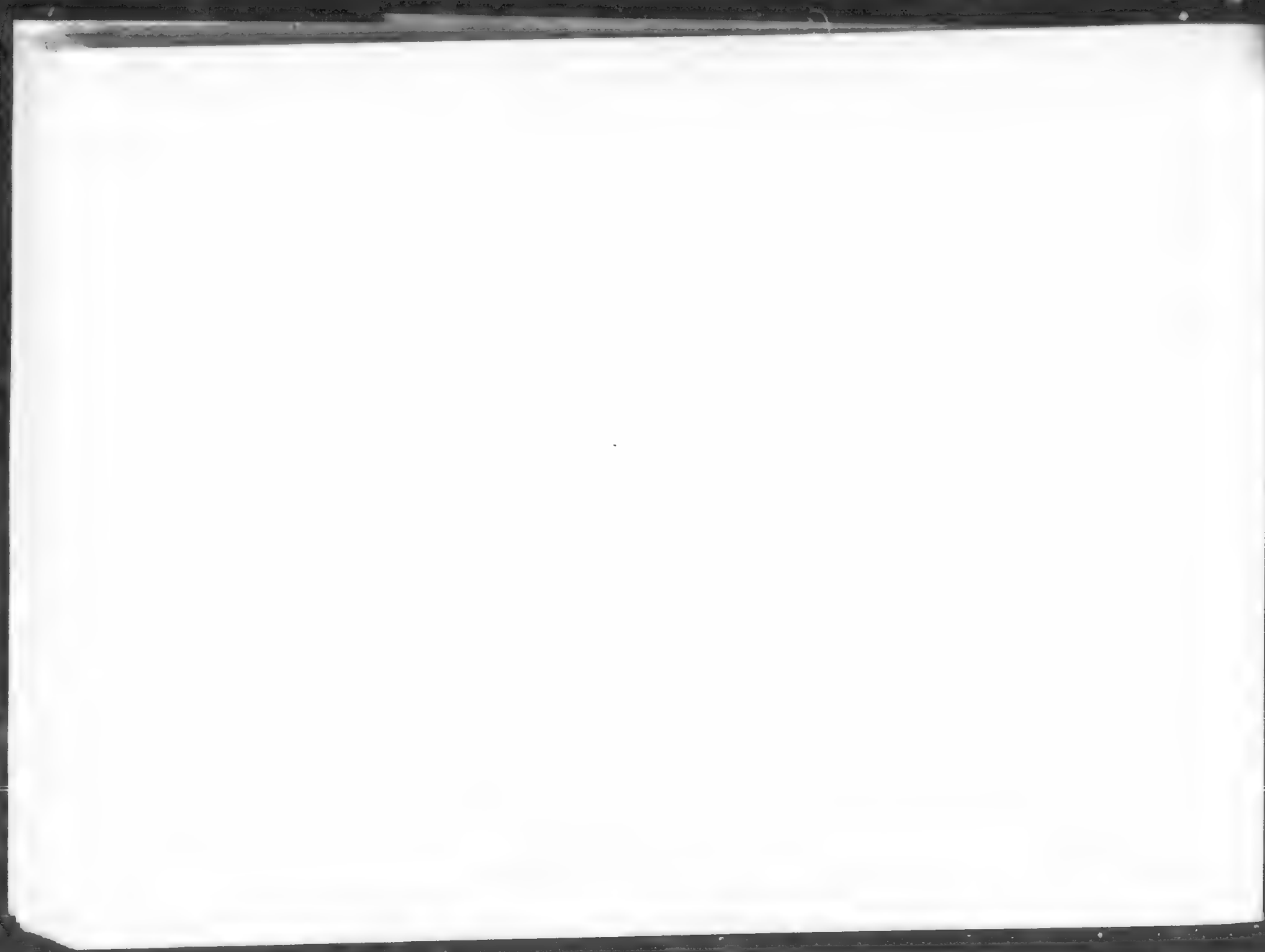
Sir Norman was the last of all his line;
 And though in all the annals of his house
 No baseness ever stain'd one noble name,

Sir Norman was the glory and the prime;
 And, like an autumn sun, the name, with him,
 Went down in splendor o'er the with'ring leaf
 And fruitless, sapless trunk of Chivalry.
 As valiant as the best, a purer air
 His loftier spirit breathed, and none there were
 Among his royst'ring peers could measure him.
 In his demesne an ancient abbey stood,
 Where many a pensive hour Sir Norman pass'd
 In ghostly reverie or converse deep
 Of questions never raised in camp or court;
 Naithless, no gloomy anchorite was he,
 Nor one to chill the fervid noon of joy
 With dismal clouds of spleen-engender'd creeds.
 But life is more than festival and war,
 And more than wealth and land, renown and love;
 (So whisper'd Reason) and he must achieve
 Some deed more worthy to embalm his name
 Than bidding wine in ruddy rivers flow,
 Or aiding love-lorn damsels in distress,
 Or hunting timorous creatures of the field,
 Or winning laurels in the tournament,
 Or hewing red roads through embattled hosts, —
 Though peerless he in every knightly grace.
 So 'mid the whirl and flush of revelry,



The sweetest music lost its power to please ;
 The rarest nectar of all sunny climes
 Flow'd by his lips unquaff'd ; the richest fruit
 That ever hung round Autumn's swarthy brow, —
 Nay, even woman's sweet, seductive charms, —
 All, all were impotent, insipid, vain !
 Led by the pensive Spirit of the Night,
 He moved away unmark'd, and, thrusting back
 The silken folds that round the casement fell,
 Stepp'd forth upon the parapet, and gazed
 Full long and silent down the dizzy steep ;
 And then with folded hands, as if in prayer,
 He raised his sad eyes to the sleepless stars :
 Th' eternal glory of those awful heights, —
 So infinite, so populous, so still ! —
 The dreamy landscape and the whisp'ring winds
 Calm'd down the troubled currents of his heart,
 And thus he breathed into the ear of night :
 " Ye worlds, ye almost spiritual hosts
 That stand about heaven's vestibule to guide
 Lone-wand'ring spirits o'er the sunless gulf,
 And shudder lest they miss the narrow way, —
 How do ye shame with your unchanging beams
 The majesty of man ! In vain he builds
 Upon the rock-ribb'd earth for perpetuity,

And plants his ensign on the buttress'd wall,
 And dreams that marble shaft and granite pile
 Shall awe the coming ages with his name !
 A few years pass — how few ! — and men shall ask,
 ' Who rear'd these crumbling pillars ? ' but receive
 No answer ; nay, not one to tell of him !
 Whence, then, this airy spirit that o'erleaps
 The narrow bounds of time, when time itself
 So quickly sifts the dust upon his pride ?
 And what is given to feed this flatt'ring hope,
 Which Heaven has cradled in all human hearts,
 That we may live immortal as the stars,
 With whom we fondly link our destinies ?
 Oh, it must be the boundless love that flows
 In the broad bosom of humanity !
 For will not every drop of that great heart
 Swell to a sea, on which a blessed name
 Shall float through time into eternity ? "
 Thus much ; and o'er his brow there beam'd a
 • light,
 ' That not the stars, but Heaven alone did shed ;
 ' Then swept a wave of music on his ear,
 ' That brought him back to earth and self again.
 " How like the din of bedlamites and fools,
 ' These silly, wanton songs — this noisy mirth —



This revelry ! Nay, seems it not profane ?
 Here, in this charnel-house that men call Earth,
 This narrow gateway of infinitude, —
 Porch of eternity — heaven's vestibule ! —
 To feast and laugh and sing and dance and dream !
 Yet wherefore should I judge the idle moth,
 That scorns the joyless prudence of the ant,
 Which in the tranquillest hour of summer's prime
 Doth hear the marshalling of wintry storms ?
 Why, if these lightsome revelers obey
 The motions of their souls, as I do mine,
 They may be worshipping ! Men are unlike,
 As you, ye myriad orbs ; yet, as ye beam,
 Some wondrous bright, some faint and far away,
 Are ye not all as it were best to be ?"
 "Ah, but they hear thee not !" a sweet voice
 trill'd :

"They're not so near as I. God rules yon powers:
 Our duties do not stretch so far away ;
 But round our feet, among the weeds and flowers,
 In the plain light of day. Then, Norman, love,
 Why gauge the heavens for wisdom such as that,
 And leave the bowl, fair-kiss'd, to blush for thee,
 And all thy guests upon the top and plume
 Of this night's happiness ? I marvell'd much

What phantom purpose lured you from my side,
 And more admired what held, till round my heart
 The icy-coiling terrors 'gan to fold !
 What — what, I fancied, if his brain grow dazed
 With this obstreperous rout, and, leaning o'er
 The battlements to medicine his lungs
 With wholesome air, his powerless fingers slip !
 Oh ! then I saw upon the rocks beneath,
 A sight most dread ; and forth the cold drops
 came,
 Beading my brow, till I could bide no more.
 Now I shall ever fear those murd'rous rocks ! —
 Why, Norman dost thou hear ? Oh, speak to me !"
 But Norman stood transfix'd, and gazed at her
 With eyes that saw not her, but some dim form,
 Some visionary creature of the mind
 A million leagues beyond, and vaguely sigh'd,
 "*The last and first !*"

Whereat she tinkled out
 A timid laugh, and vow'd that he was like
 The whisp'ring Memnon ; then a shadow pass'd
 Athwart her pleading features as she said,
 "'Tis most ungallant to forsake the field
 And all your doughty knights at such a pinch !
 And thou, the Flower of Chivalry, consent



An empty stool should bear me company !
 What, if some other claim'd that vacant throne?
 Too well thou know'st that I am thine alone."
 "Sweet Mab," he answer'd, "thou art mine
 alone."

Then bending, lightly kiss'd her dewy lids
 And lips all tremulous, and closer press'd
 Her lithe form to his bosom as he breathed :
 "Aye, thou art all ! But I do truly grieve
 If I have lessen'd by a feather's weight,
 The pleasures of this night. Thine ears did steal
 The coinage of my dreams: alas, fair thief,
 Thou art not much enrich'd ! For I do lack
 That sweet philosophy that maketh thee
 A flower, a bird, a child ; nay, better still,
 An angel pure."

"Oh no, my lord, not I:
 I'm but a woman, with a woman's heart, —
 Now sad, now glad, — a woman, — nothing more
 Nor less, — thy wife."

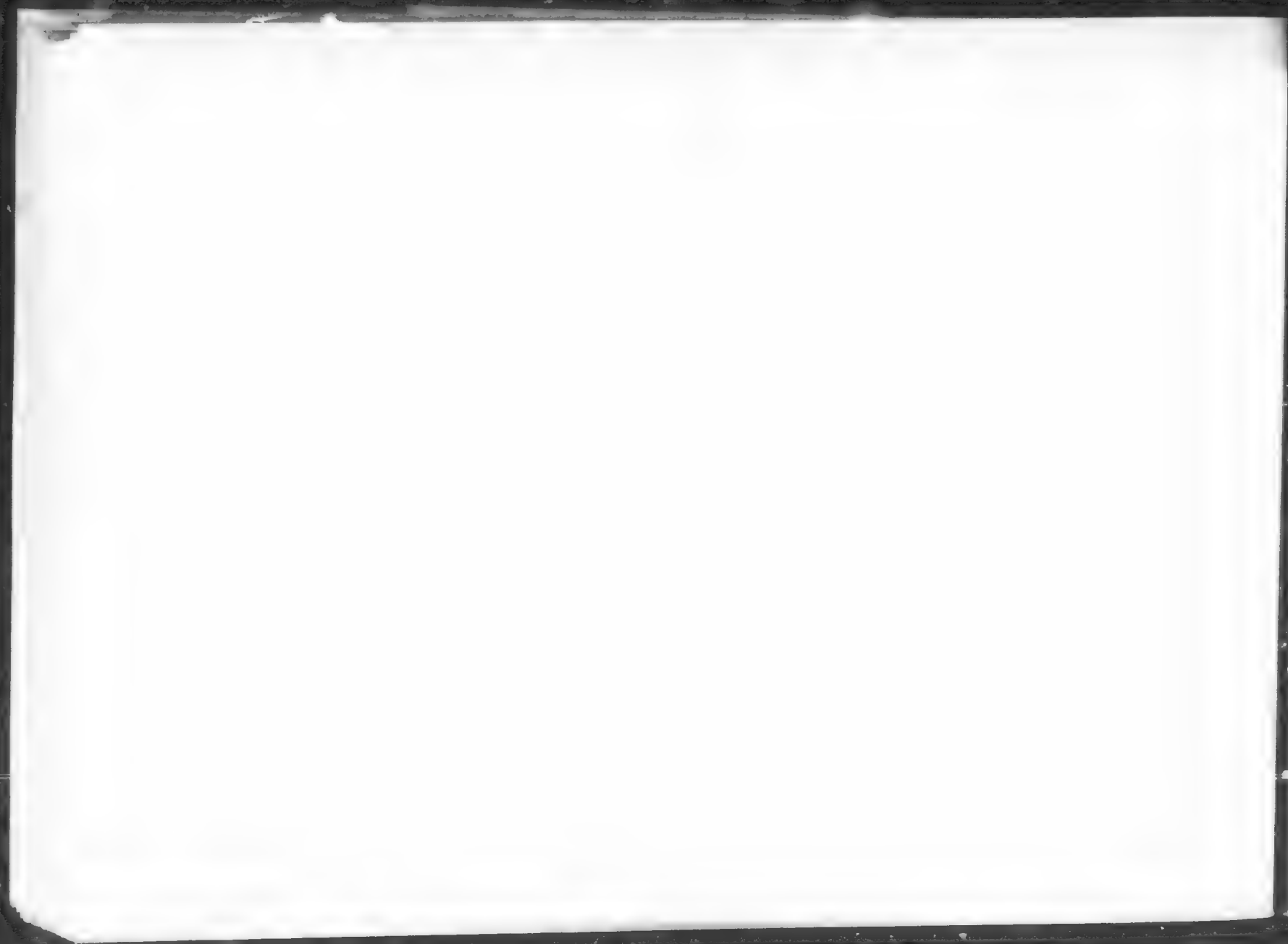
"Yea, so thou art indeed !
 Thank Heaven, thou art ! O Mabel, save in thee,
 How poor and bankrupt is your Norman's life !
 How empty of all purpose, end, and aim !
 How like a glimmering taper dying out

In dark, oblivious, everlasting night !"

"Oh, think not thus, my lord : 't is neither just
 Nor wholesome thus to think. Your sun of life
 Hath not yet reach'd his noon — your moon,
 Her full — your year, her summer prime : as yet,
 Your fruit is green, your harvest still to come."
 "Scant crop, and brief the time."

"The longest life
 Ill-spent were brief; the briefest, long, that serves
 Life's purposes: but then, we little know
 Of things so deep. What necessary point
 Of knightly 'complishment doth Norman lack?
 Is wise, pure, brave: what more shall Norman
 be?"

"Aye, 't is this *more* belittles all the rest !
 For all the rest are only painted shows,
 That for an hour make slaves forget their chains:
 This *more* surrounds us like a murky mist
 Engender'd on the deep, and inland roll'd,
 Obscuring heaven and earth in sable folds.
 There looms a *shall be* of so vast a size,
 That all our *have beens* dwindle to a dot !
 Vain is the glory that is reap'd in blood ;
 Who draws the sword shall perish with the sword ;
 Enduring power is built on love alone.



There is in every soul a reaching out
To years unborn." . . .

"Why, Norman, is it thou!"

And Mabel slipp'd his arms and backward drew
In mimic wonderment and lovely scorn:

"Dost wear a cowl? Nay, 't is a cap and plume!

And, holy sire, is this a sackcloth robe

Hung o'er thy lean and penance-blister'd back?

What! velvet, sir, and 'broidery of gold,

And gems that twinkle brighter than the stars?

A sword forsooth! — is that thy crucifix?

And this thy rosary, a silver chain?

With silken sash in lieu of hempen rope?

Oh, what a galliard monk and reverend knight!

For, marry, both in thee are mix'd and marr'd."

Then, with her white hands perch'd upon his arm,

Like coupled doves, she coo'd into his ear:

"O Norman, love, be never less than thou!

Your mind with too much pond'ring hath been
warpt

To one incline, and springs not back again

To all its fair proportions without strain.

Your one thought is the gangrene of the mind:

It eats and eats till all is foul disease;

'T is like a lens that bends a million beams

To one bright, burning point — a fiery dart;

Or as a brook, when choked by drifted wrack,

Frets out a lawless channel through the fields,

And, gath'ring force from ev'ry tiny rill,

Sweeps down with wild destruction to the deep.

No, 't is not healthy, Norman, mark you that;

For what is madness, but a mind possess'd, —

Enslaved and fashion'd to one tyrant thought?"

"Nay, fear not, Mab; my madness will not harm

The slightest film of whatsoe'er is right;

But p'rhaps it may imperil what is wrong, —

A very lamb-like madness, I assure ye!

As yet I'm safe enough: a thousand thoughts

Hold parley in my mind; but action sleeps.

When I have shaped the purpose to my mind,

You surely shall be judge; till then, sing on."

"Ah, cruel you, to whet my appetite,

And then withhold the fruit! But, woe is me!

I know too much, I fear, about it now, —

My little fingers can untwist those threads,

That have not form'd themselves to firmer web

Than mix'd and filmy tangles in your brain."

"I would," he said, "you were an oracle!"

"And I," quoth she, "that you were all you are;

Yet could I wish me other than I am,



If other were more loved by thee than I."

She ceased, — but spoke in tears more eloquent,
Which he, low bending, answer'd in like words.

Then came her voice again so softly sad
That a' the little zephyrs held their breath,
Lest they might blow her trembling words away:

"O Norman mine! the myrtle-leaves are green,
And blossoms gather on the fig-tree still;
God knows what fruit may ripen i' the sun."

"Sweet heart, thou know'st me not," Sir Norman
said, —

"Thou know'st me not," he said, and deeply
sigh'd.

"Let not such false lights flicker in your soul,
Since they have, many moons, in mine gone out,
Whose hope doth plume her for a loftier flight
Than thy fond spirit broods o'er in distress.
Warm'd into being by the heart's embrace,
Shall not the issue of the mind alone
Survive the charr'd foundations of the world? . .
Nay, weep not, love. I've had my fortune told;
Did I ne'er tell thee that? There, there; why, so!
I'm merry as a kid! — Still, it was strange! . . .
But let me tell it you."

"Oh, let it be

No lightsome tale," she moan'd: "for such I have
No stomach now."

"Nay, 't is as dark as night!"

He darkly said.

"Oh, prithee, then, be mute!

My spirit swims in shadows even now."

"Well, Mab, my tale shall be a twilight one,"

He answer'd smiling: "neither dark nor light;
But both or either, as you may divine. . . .

One noon, in Palestine, as we encamp'd
Within the cincture of a cypress-grove, —

For such there are beneath the fiercest skies,
Fair children of the sunshine and the dew,

That heartless ruin hath not heart to blast, —
There came a dusky woman and her boy, —

A wild-eyed, wolfish, hunger-bitten pair,
Chance-nurtured, dwelling in the tombs with bats

And basilisks: I see that woman now, —

Her weird, fantastic garb, her skinny claws
That hawk-like grasp'd the little dole I dropt,

When she, in words interpreted to me,
Unfolded all my past and future deeds!

I swear to thee, as page by page she read
The annals of my life, I was amazed:

She knew me better than I knew myself!



And what she prophesied hath come to pass,
In all save this alone, that I should be
The first of all my lineage and the last. . .
I never told thee this: what think you of 't?"
"Think? I think it strange."

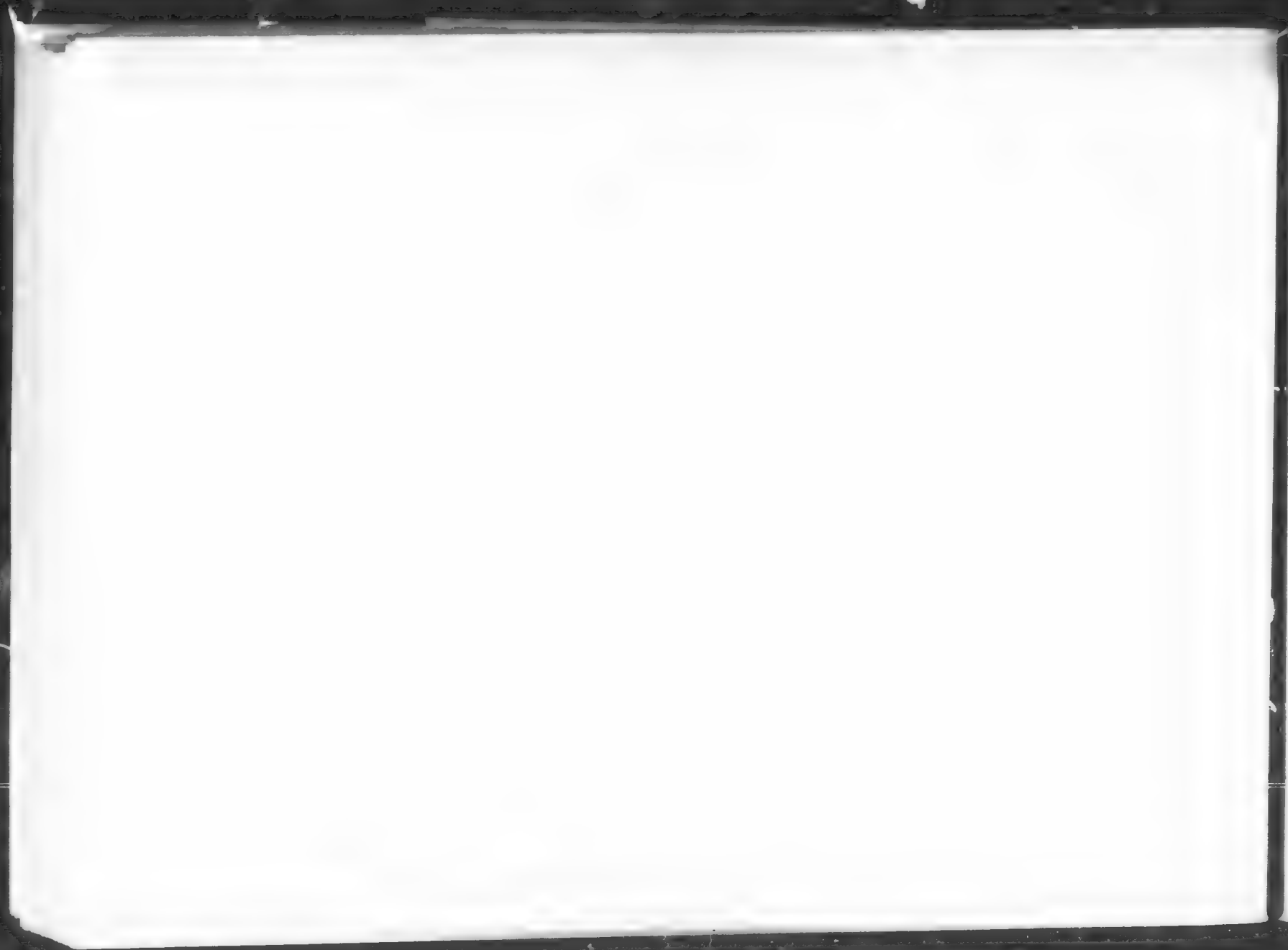
"Wonderful is 't not?"

"Most wonderful indeed!"

"So think I, Mab."

"Surpassing wonderful, that thou hast heard
With all thy golden wealth such worthless dross!
Thou art deceived: thy dragoman, no doubt,
Was some old friend of thine who kenn'd thee
well,
P'rhaps held thee on his knee, and knew as much
The barb'rous jargon of the gipsy hag
As did yourself: some oily Judas monk,
I warrant you, as crafty as a fox,
Whose guile is only equal'd by his greed.
'Twas thus and thus: let me thy Daniel be,
To read the mystic writing on the wall:
Thy days are number'd and thou hast no heir
To all thy rich domain. Thou art the last;
But give the Church thy lands, and thou shalt be
The first, the best, the flower of all thy house!
O Heaven! what greed, what gluttony, what guile,

What everything that's bad is misnamed Church!
How can such solemn mockery survive!"
"Stay, stay! my little wife doth speak too fast!
The Church is holy, though her priests be flesh:
She is the Mother at whose breasts we feed;
She is the Guardian to whose arms we flee, —
We must revere the Church; but who shall walk
This dusty world and not pollute his feet?
Not feeble men; then, so much more the need
Of blessed shrive; for even monks are men."
"I faith, and so they be! and fat men too;
Though some of 'em be lean; but, o' the twain,
I like the fat ones best; for they sleep most,
And so are out o' mischief. . . Oh, I know
'll burn for heresy some rainy day! . . .
But say, did not your meek interpreter, —
Your very dusty, very fleshly monk, —
Just breathe — just whisper some such pious hint?"
"My ghostly father, who was standing nigh,
Did hazard some such jest," Sir Norman said;
But did I never tell it thee before?"
"No, never," she replied; "nor could I hope
To hear such fancies till your eyes be dim,
And four-score winters powder'd on your brow!
Would that your ghostly father were a ghost!"



I knew it well: so like the mitred Leech,
That sucks and sucks the life-blood of the land!"

"Nay, Mabel; mock me not nor jest at Fate:
What Heaven decrees, may mortal man escape?"

"What Heaven decrees, we wish not to escape;
But when Heaven warns of what Time's womb
contains,

The hallow'd message comes not through the lips
Of crafty monks or skinny, wrinkled hags;
But angels, pure and viewless as the breath
Of od'rous airs that scarce the aspens move,
Glide softly as the moon-beams 'round our couch
And fill our inmost soul with heavenly light!"

"True, Mabel, true; for so they come to-night!
Yet heed me, love: e'en now, as I did gaze
Along yon quivering dome, I saw a star
Most wond'rous bright fly wildly from her throne,
Dimming her sisters till herself grew dim,
And then was seen no more, — some Hagar orb,
Driven forth of heaven to weep. What bodes it,
Mab?

See you no sign nor portent in the sight?
Or was it one more world to judgment call'd, —
Some poor, sad world like ours? Yet listen, love;
We hear no discord in th' eternal hymn,

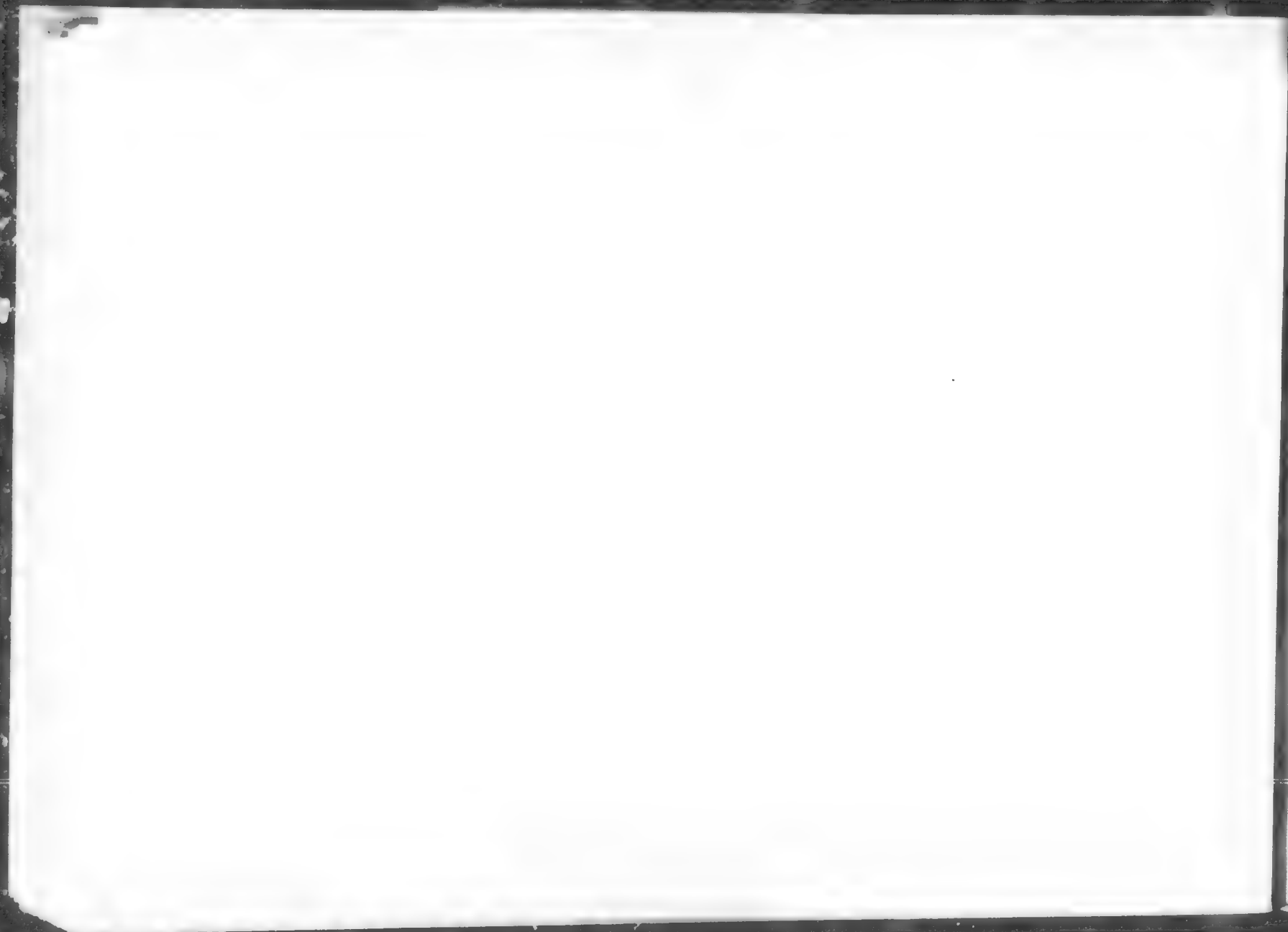
Nor is Night's crown less lovely by the loss, —
So little miss'd is one so fair a gem! . . .

What would you, Mab?"

"I would," quoth she, "that you
Should learn how time flies by your flying stars!
For now have vacant seats been long enough
Our deputies: the wheel of pleasure droops,
The axle being removed. To-night, my liege,
When all these wassailers have slid them down
To swiney slumbers, and the halls are void,
And voice no ruder than the cricket's chirp
Disturb the silence of our drowsy towers,
I'll whisper somewhat in your willing ear,
Will populate your brain with dancing dreams."

So went they in, and left the battlements
To bats and fairy revelers in the dew.

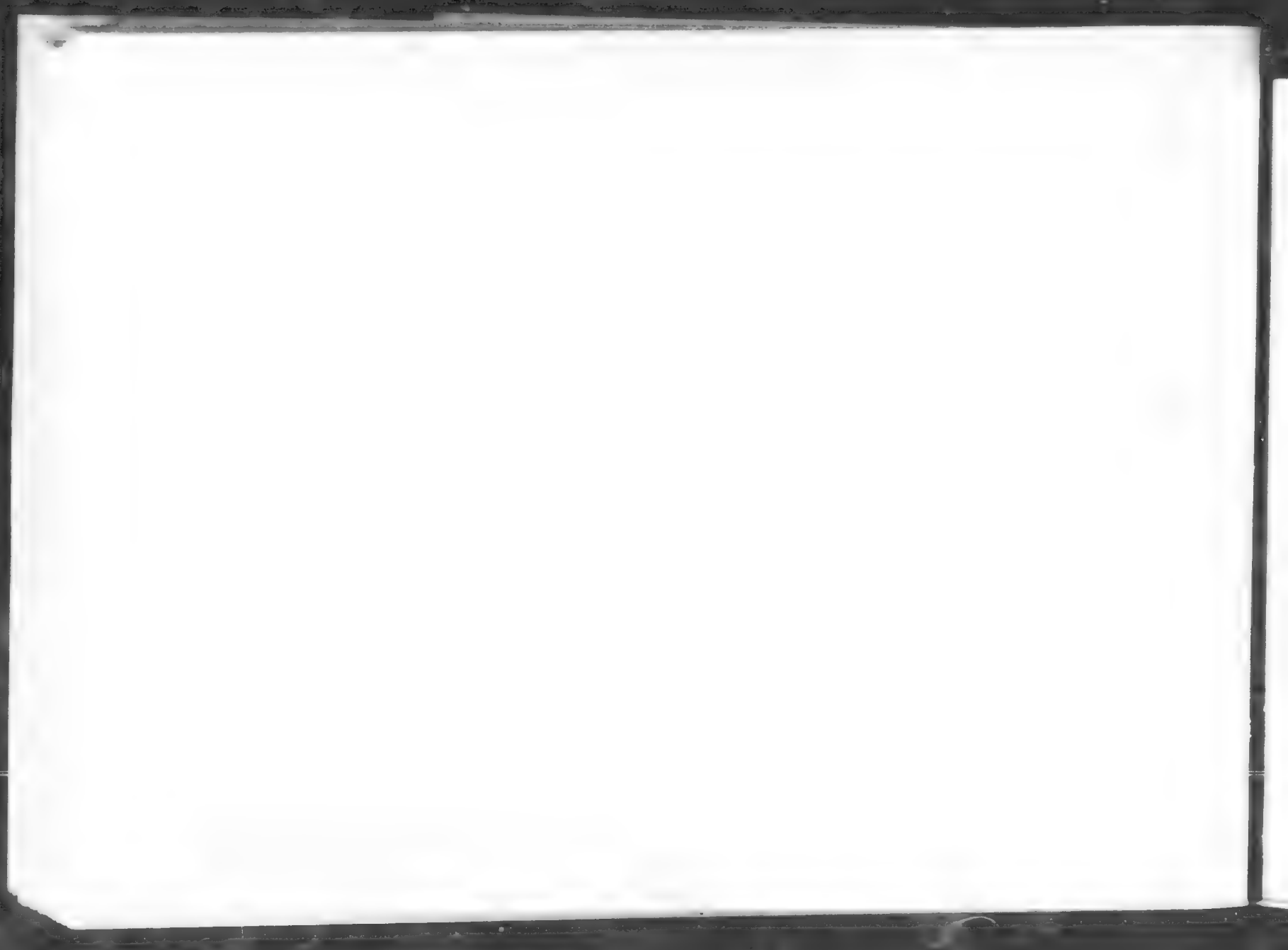
*Oh, sweet be all thy dreams, love;
Lightly, happily rest, —
Pure as the silvery beams, love,
That dapple thy heaving breast!
Nothing can harm, nothing alarm
Thee, my own, my best;
For sleepless Love around, above,
Doth ward thy silken nest!*



The mellow twilight deepens, and the night
 Sinks softly o'er the vale. Like some stern chief,
 Forgetful of his wounds in dalliance sweet,
 The grim towers deign to smile. No sounds awake
 But such as soothe the ear: some vesper bell
 Slow-swinging far away, some tinkling lute
 High up in yon recess, and the faint sigh
 Of the night-rising breeze. There is a spell,
 A witchery in the hour, more weird, methinks,
 Than middle-night; for then the watchful stars
 Companion us: but in this gloaming time, —
 In such a place as this, — dim spectral forms,
 Pale, hollow-eyed, are seen, — unquiet souls,
 Who shun the light and murmur in link'd pairs
 Beneath the elms. Ah, well-a-day! may Heaven
 Forefend us! See! with silent steps they come,
 Two human figures, gliding o'er the lawn, —
 A maid and cavalier! The dusky light
 But half reveals their features; yet we start
 At some remember'd likeness as they pass,
 And, melting into shade, are seen no more!
 Come, let us in: the night grows chill and dark,
 And either ghosts or lovers haunt this park.

Like waves that leave no trace upon the sands
 Of all their beauty and of all their might,
 The days flow'd on, till one day went there forth
 Swift pursuivants through all the wide domain,
 Proclaiming to Sir Norman's vassalry,
 That in the castle-yard on such a noon,
 They gather, all who may, both old and young.

Then was there doubt and wonder in the land,
 And anxious dread, when many a mother wrapt,
 Within convulsive arms, her tender care,
 As ever she would moan, "Who will provide
 For these our little ones, if he be gone —
 Their only hope? Oh why, Sir Norman, why
 Is war so sweet to thee, that is to us
 So full of bitterness? O wretched life!
 To-day, all nestling in our lowly cot;
 To-morrow, wrench'd asunder, ne'er to meet;
 Our pottage season'd with unceasing tears;
 Trembling at night for what the morn may bring.
 Our innocent babes, that should be founts of joy,
 O'erflow the bitter cup, since they are nursed
 Not for the comfort of the breasts they press,
 But the wild license of a lordly will!
 What hope have we in life?" And so the night
 Was darken'd with despair, till rose the morn



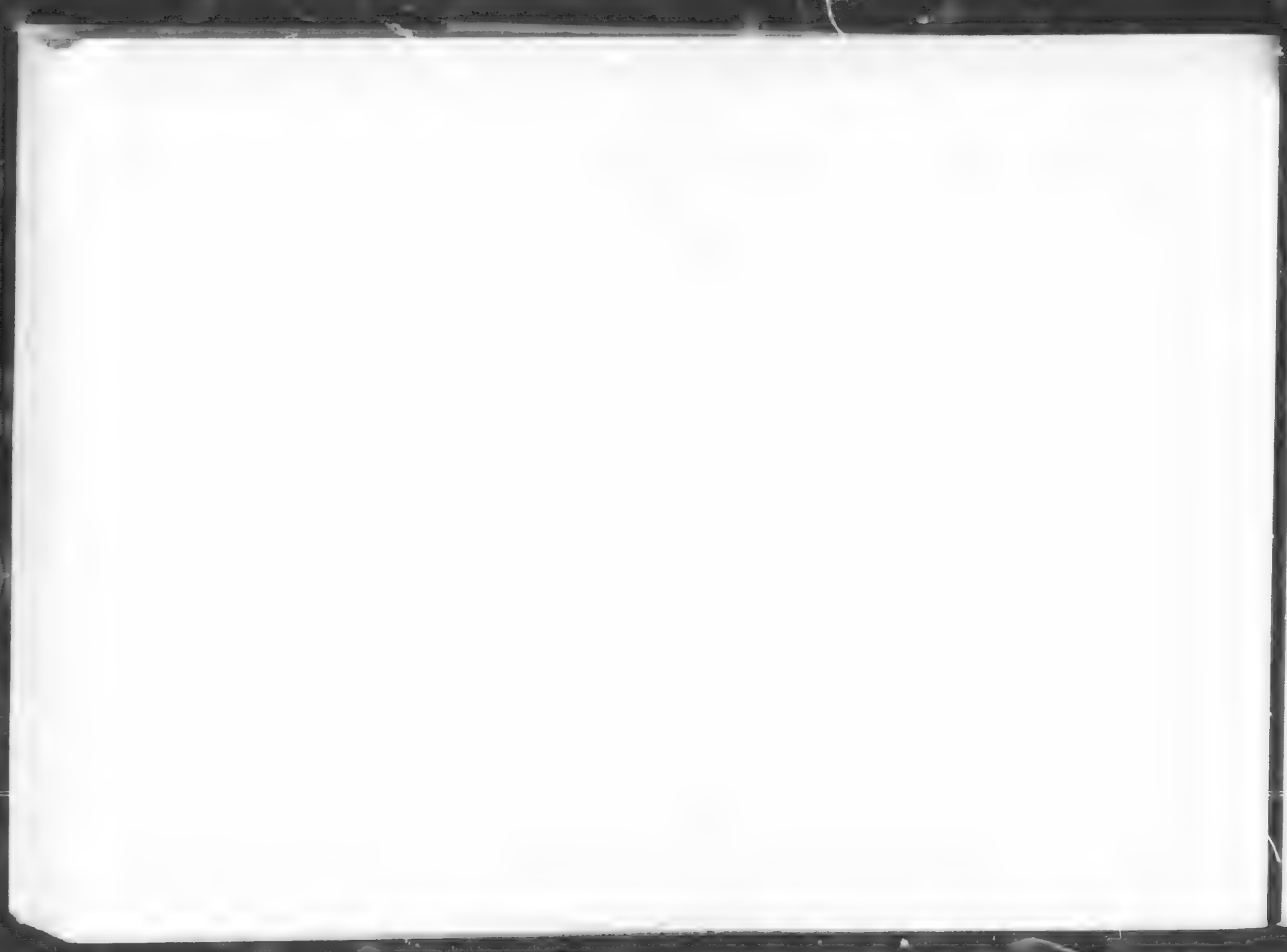
O' doubt-dispersing day, what time she spread
Her heavy wings and vanish'd o'er the hills.

Hail, Morning! emblem of immortal life,
Of youth and beauty and eternal joy, —
All fresh and fragrant, as with rosy smile
Thou shakest the dewy pearls from thy green robe,
And leaning o'er thy couch of purple cloud,
Dost gild the mountain-tops with hues of heaven.
A million hearts rejoice! — the forest rings! —
And the lone, weary watcher, who hath long,
In tears and darkness, waited for thy light,
Takes up his hymn, "Now lettest thou, O Lord,
Thy servant part in peace; for, lo, mine eyes
Have seen the dawn of Liberty and Love,
And the long night of Tyranny and Strife
Fade out forever from this new-born world!"

O Day to be remember'd through all time, —
When in the furnace of all-potent Love,
Fair Birth and Worth were molten into one!
O bright-wing'd Day! in amber song embalm'd,
And sang thro' all the years by Freedom's sons!
Sang when the rosy lads and lasses dance
Around the May-pole to the merry pipes;
Or blithely labor in the streaming fields,

The skylark caroling the clouds among;
Or through the starry paces of the night,
Their fleecy care from wolfish fangs defend;
Or at high noon, beneath umbrageous boughs,
Behold their sleek kine mirror'd in the pool,
Where lilies float like fairy fleets becalm'd;
Or when, with rustic melody and mirth,
They hail the creaking wain of harvest home;
Or merrily ring'd around the Christ's log,
Retell the legends of the dim old days.

Now o'er Sir Norman's walls gay banners float,
Gay sights are seen, and festive sounds are heard;
The bridge is lower'd, and slowly up the path
That winds and zig-zags to the castle gate,
Men, women, children move in motley groups:
Here sturdy lads their weaker sisters lead,
And there a mother holds her nursing babe;
And next, a father bears his rosy boy, —
A pippin munching in his dimpled fist;
Young, lusty hinds, stout-limb'd and full of life,
With maidens coy and blooming as the flowers
They slyly wander from the path to pluck.
But ere the shadows crept beneath the walls,
The latest stood within the castle-court.



No word or shout was heard ; but, deep and low,
 Up-droned a murmur as of swarming bees
 Or far-off billows, till the great bell clang'd
 The hour of noon, and stood Sir Norman forth
 In view of all, — when, like a mountain storm,
 Sudden and wild, a mighty cheer went up :
 “ God save our liege, Sir Norman o’ the Vale !
 Long live Sir Norman, our liege lord and true ! ”
 Loud blared the trumpets, and the tumult ceased ;
 Then came Sir Norman’s words to every ear :
 “ Ye have obey’d my summons well and true,
 As ever was your wont when duty call’d,
 And battle’s crimson banners waved on high.
 But now the wars are over, and secure,
 We may with honor lay the sword aside,
 And delve again our long-neglected fields.” —
 “ God bless our liege ! ” a woman’s voice rings out,
 Whereat a thousand treble voices ring,
 In chorus wild, “ Amen ! God bless our liege ! ”
 Then spake Sir Norman, “ Heaven defend us all !
 ’Twas on your breasts the fury of the waves
 First beat and spent their force : ye stood as stand
 The cliffs, immovable around our land !
 And ever will ! ” And now the deep bass rolls :
 “ And ever will ! ” Then, stretching out his hand,

Sir Norman spake again : “ ’Tis rich reward
 To know that we have done our duty well :
 The conscience of a traitor is a wound
 That hath no remedy in heaven or hell !
 But ye are good, true men, who love your land,
 Your wives, your children, and whose noble deeds
 Are writ in many a scar that all may read ;
 So ’t is my purpose that you have the rights
 Your loyalty has won — your full desert —
 What God to you hath given, but man withheld ;
 And hence this boon will be the gift of God,
 Whom humbly thank for all that may ensue.
 These lands that I do hold by right of birth,
 Are mine alone ; and with them do I claim
 What thereon is, hath been, or e’er shall be, —
 All forest, field, and stream, and what therein
 Do live and move of fish, bird, beast, and man ;
 To use or give, to hold or to divide,
 And he who challengeth my lawful right
 May now or never make his title good.”

He paused and reverent bared his ample brow,
 As though recording angels hover’d round.
 Meanwhile the trumpets blew a billowy blast
 East, west, and north, and south, — to ev’ry point,
 That roll’d along the walls from tower to tower,



And broke in answering echoes down the vale.
Then came his deep voice o'er the breathless
court:

"There cometh none my lawful right to doubt;
So now give heed and witness to my will,
Which in few words I here make known to all:

"In God his name, amen! I now proclaim,
*From this day and forever are you free, —
Free of all fief or feud, tithing or tax,
Save what with your consent may be imposed;
Nor without twelve good men of like estate
Thereto agreed, shall any be condemn'd
Of whatsoever crime he stand accused
In open court, wherein for all alike
Shall even-handed Justice hold the scales.
Free to go forth as men with sacred rights,
To labor for yourselves and little ones;
That you may train them in the love of God,
Their Country and their King, and without dread
Of mortal man. That howe'er lowly be
The four walls of your dwelling, they shall stand,
By solemn laws intrench'd, impregnable
Around your hearths: through ragged loop and rent,
Wind, rain, or hail may visit you; but not
The King himself may come within your gates."*

He ceased, and naught the sudden silence broke,
Save darting swallows twitt'ring o'er the walls;
For wordless wonder sate on every face:
They fathom'd not the gift, — they only knew
That some great boon was granted, but no more.
And so the swallows twitter'd, till arose
One deep breath, long repress'd, when each did
search

The other's face for answer, still in vain.
Then mutely turn'd they to the balcony,
As though to find solution of their doubts;
But all had vanish'd save the sentinels,
Whose polish'd armor glitter'd in the sun.

But while they stood amazed, and what to do, —
Whether to weep or laugh, to go or stay, —
Knew not, the great doors open'd, and a host
Of nimble menials roll'd the viands forth, —
Great tuns of beer and mighty trenchers heap'd
With savory meats and wheaten bread and fruit,
In wonderful profusion and the best.
And then came minstrels and gay troubadours, —
Their bonnets garlanded with faded flowers
That once did kiss the Arno or the Rhine,
Or sip the dews of Andalusian fields,
Or star the green champagnes of Languedoc; —



And motley clowns with visage woebegone,
 And quips that "set the table in a roar;"
 And tumblers walking with their heels in air,
 And morris-dancers capering round and round,
 And pretty pages with their golden curls,
 And high-born maids, and gallant cavaliers,
 And grizzly vet'rans of a hundred fields;
 And then, unheralded, Sir Norman came,
 With genial smile and golden sentences
 That ne'er should gather dimness from neglect,
 But in remembrance bright and burnish'd be,—
 A joy in every season fresh and full!

Yet did the churls their reason catechise,
 "Can this be Norman's self?"—that mighty man,
 Whose very name was ever breathed in awe!

"How manly-clear the music of his voice!
 Albeit he speaks the very words we speak,—
 The same old mother-language of our lips!"

So while they pass'd the beaker hand to hand,
 And wonder'd at the bounty of their host,
 And wonder'd at the castle's massive strength,
 And wonder'd how much bacon was consumed,
 And how much beer, and bread, and fruit,
 And what, withal, was meant by being free,—
 They were like children wand'ring in a maze—

A fairy-haunted wood: a golden mist,
 A dreamy light half hid and half reveal'd
 The unfamiliar splendor of the scene!
 What they had reach'd beyond this banqueting,
 They fail'd to grasp—no doubt, some mighty gift:
 It swam before their vision like the moon,
 When tawny vapors scud along the sky,—
 Now dimly seen, now swallow'd up and lost!
 They stood bewilder'd on the borderland—
 The hazy bounds betwixt the Old and New:
 They did not feel that Vassalage was dear,
 They did not know that Liberty was born;
 They saw, but could not comprehend, the signs
 Of dissolution and renascent life,
 Nor hear the trumpets of advancing Change!
 But such a merry day was never known
 In all the land: a day of jollity,
 Of dextrous feat and game, of feast and dance,
 And sweet forgetfulness of toil and care.
 The fallow deer fled off in wild dismay,
 And hid in deepest shade; the restless rocks
 Wheel'd round their lofty holds in chatt'ring
 flights,
 And the brown rabbits burrow'd in the ferns.
 Along the dappled lawns fair children skipt,



And scream'd their joy; while, group'd beneath
the elms,

Old crones and graybeards wonder'd more and
more

At all they saw, and knew not why they wept.

So pass'd the joyous hours; but when the sun

Made golden vistas down the long green lanes,

The trumpet sounded and the great bell swung.

Then gather'd all the multitude about

The portal's marble steps, whereon appear'd,

Mid flashing gems, gay robes, and nodding plumes,

Sir Norman and the Abbot of the Vale.

When every foot and every tongue was hush'd

To palpitating silence, Norman said:

"One summer-day a lovely pearl was miss'd

From out the priceless treasures of an earl.

Keen search was made on every side in vain,

And sore the great heart bled; he was alone,

With none to share the burden of his loss.

For over all his wealth this pearl he prized, —

The parting gift of his sweet bride in heaven.

But lest his heart be wither'd up with grief,

Ere yet the budding promise of his youth

Should ripen into deeds, he drew his blade,

And bravely falling with the fallen brave,

Did leave alone the shadow of a name.

But ere the last breath flutter'd in his breast,

He whisper'd thus unto his trusty friend, —

'If my lost pearl should ever come to light,

Entrust it only to a brave man's care.'

So all remembrance of the missing gem

Died out, save in the bosom of that friend.

Now, what befell this pearl, and where 't was hid

Through many a weary year, and by what hand

'T was filch'd, and by whom found, 'twere long to

tell:

Suffice to know 't was kept with sacred care,

That did reward its guardian wondrous well.

Full many a brave man follow'd us to war,

Whose mighty shades we humbly follow now, —

Who, as they stood upon the utmost verge,

And gazed with undimm'd eyes upon the sun

Of immortality, eclipsed us all;

And dumbly did we watch them, glory-crown'd,

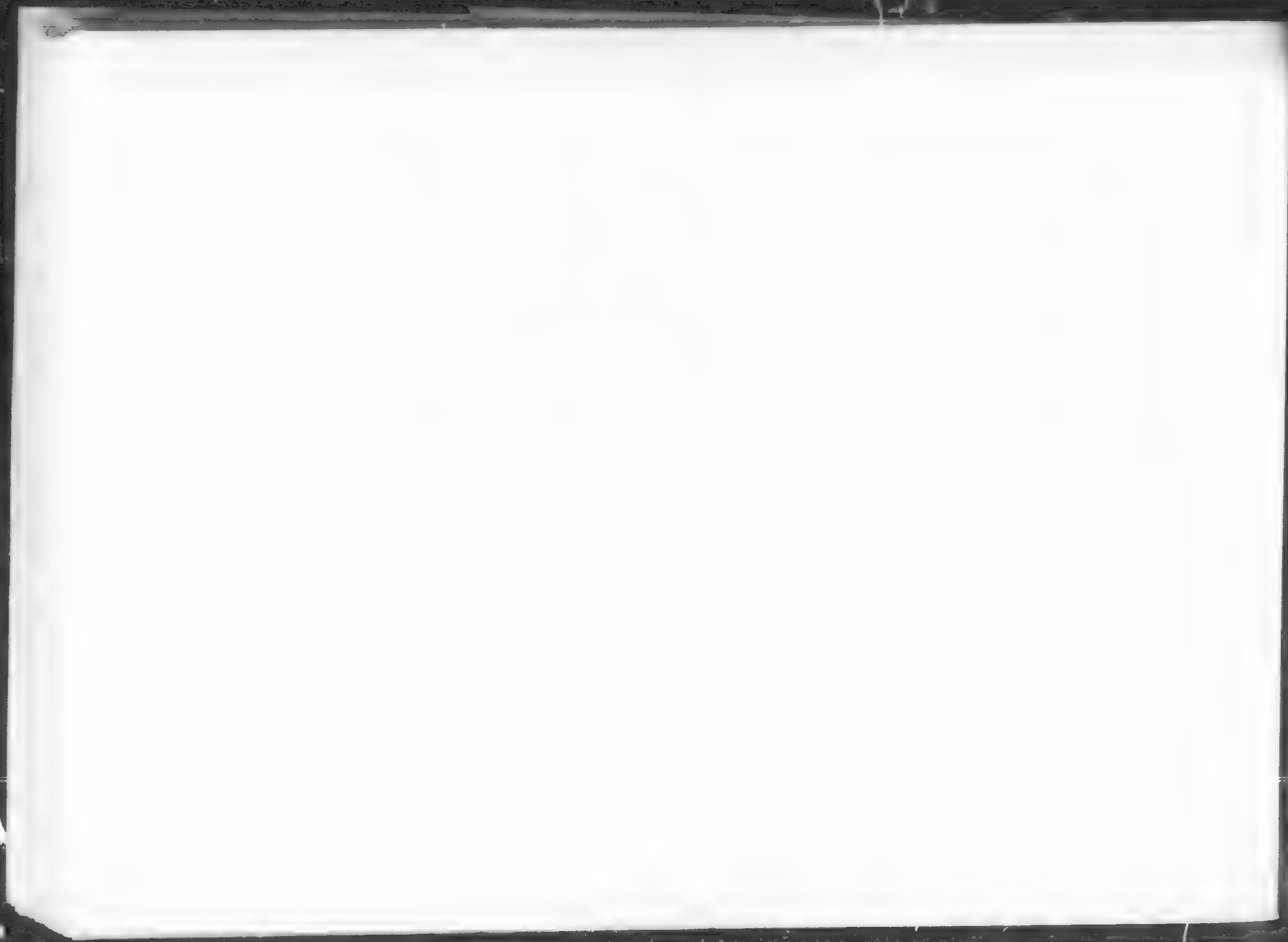
O'erleap life's Lourn and stand among the gods!

But one there lives among the favor'd few, —

Whose name burns bright among the brightest

names, —

Hath earn'd by valor and 'y solemn troth,



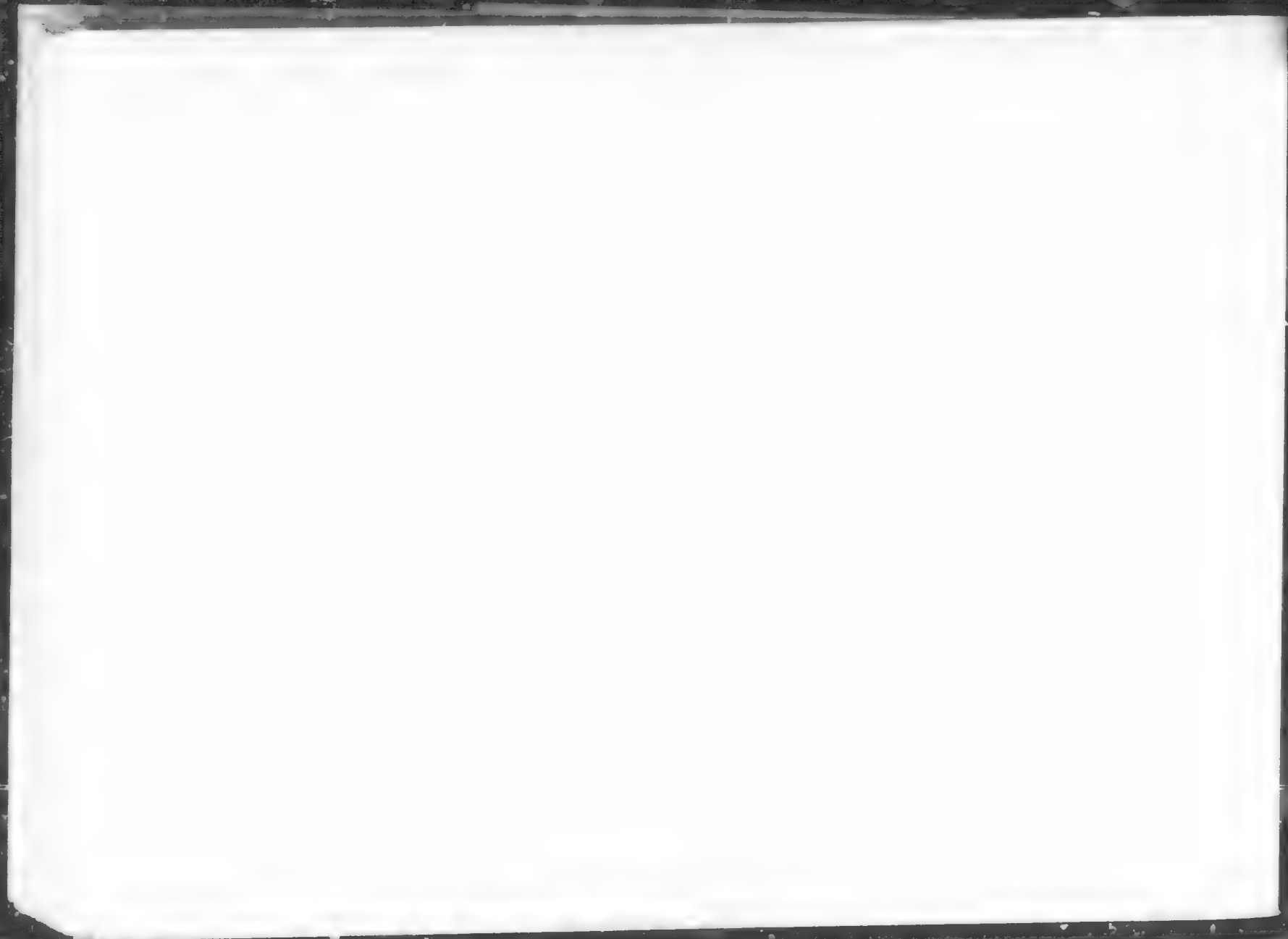
This pearl." And then Sir Norman waved his
hand

And said, "Bring forth the long-lost pearl—
The priceless recompense of love and worth!
Take, Edgar, take your Ethel to your arms,
And, holy father, make them ever one."

Like swans emerging from the tufted reeds
That barricade some secret river-cave,
Came Mabel slowly through the bending plumes,
The modest maiden leading by the hand.
Pearl-white was Ethel's robe; her sunlit curls,
A golden fillet bound, from which a rose
Droop'd down and kiss'd the rose upon her cheek.
At first, deep admiration held each tongue;
But when the groom advanced to meet his bride,
A sudden tempest swept o'er all the court,
And like quick waves that tumble to the cliff,
The eager gossips press'd around the door.

Then, crimson-curtain'd, died the gorgeous day:
So came the New, so pass'd the Old away.

Miscellaneous Poems.

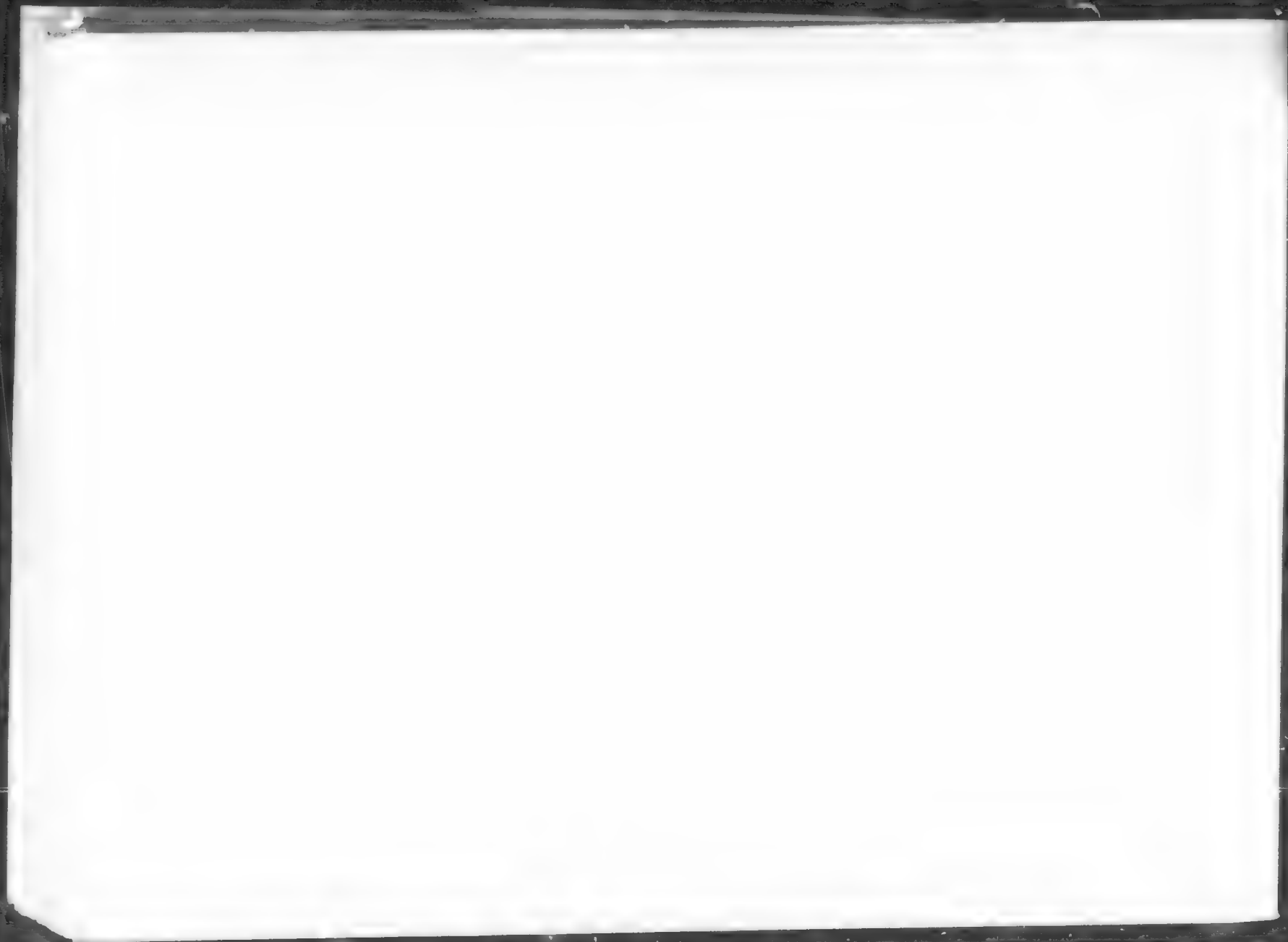




MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE RIVER.

DARK hulls of ships and slimy wharves the turbid
river laves,
And round and through the city pours her melan-
choly waves.
Oh ravish'd River! free nor pure thy tide shall
ever be,
Now Mammon with his sooty swarm has claim'd
and fetter'd thee:
'Tis thine to own the tyrant power that earth and
ocean seals,
To bear his burdens on thy breast, and whirl his
million wheels;



He curbs thee round with stake and stone, and
chains thee o'er and o'er,
And bids thee crouch beneath his hand, a slave
forevermore !

Once, how beautiful and bright
Did she mingle with the main, —
Dancing, leaping in delight,
As a wand'rer home again !
Gaily dimpling through her channels,
Misty years that reason mock,
Years that have no other annals
Than her writing on the rock !
Now, her youth and beauty fled,
Flows she loveless, joyless, dead !

Hark ! through sobs I seem to hear
Pleading murmurs soft and clear :
Know me, ere you judge me so ;
Walk beside me as I flow,
Up beyond the slimy slips,
Up beyond the shady ships,
Up beyond the bridge and quay,
Up where I am pure and free.
Come and see me gush and glide,

With a gently flowing tide,
In my stainless maiden pride :
Through the meadows green and gay,
Where the blithesome children play,
And their fair limbs dip and lave
In my cool refreshing wave ;
By the clover-perfumed mead,
Where the calm-eyed cattle feed ;
'Neath the willows, round the hill,
By the old deserted mill ;
By the hollow-crumbling bank,
Where the grass grows long and rank,
Yet a fragrance in the air
Tells of sweet buds lurking there ;
By that fairy-haunted spot,
Deck'd with sad forget-me-not ;
Where the branches throw their shade
Over many a mossy glade,
That for love alone were made.
Come up farther, where I dally
With the tall reeds in the valley,
And among them gleam and glisten,
Till you think I cease to flow ;
But you 'll hear me, if you listen,
Murmur songs the lilies know —



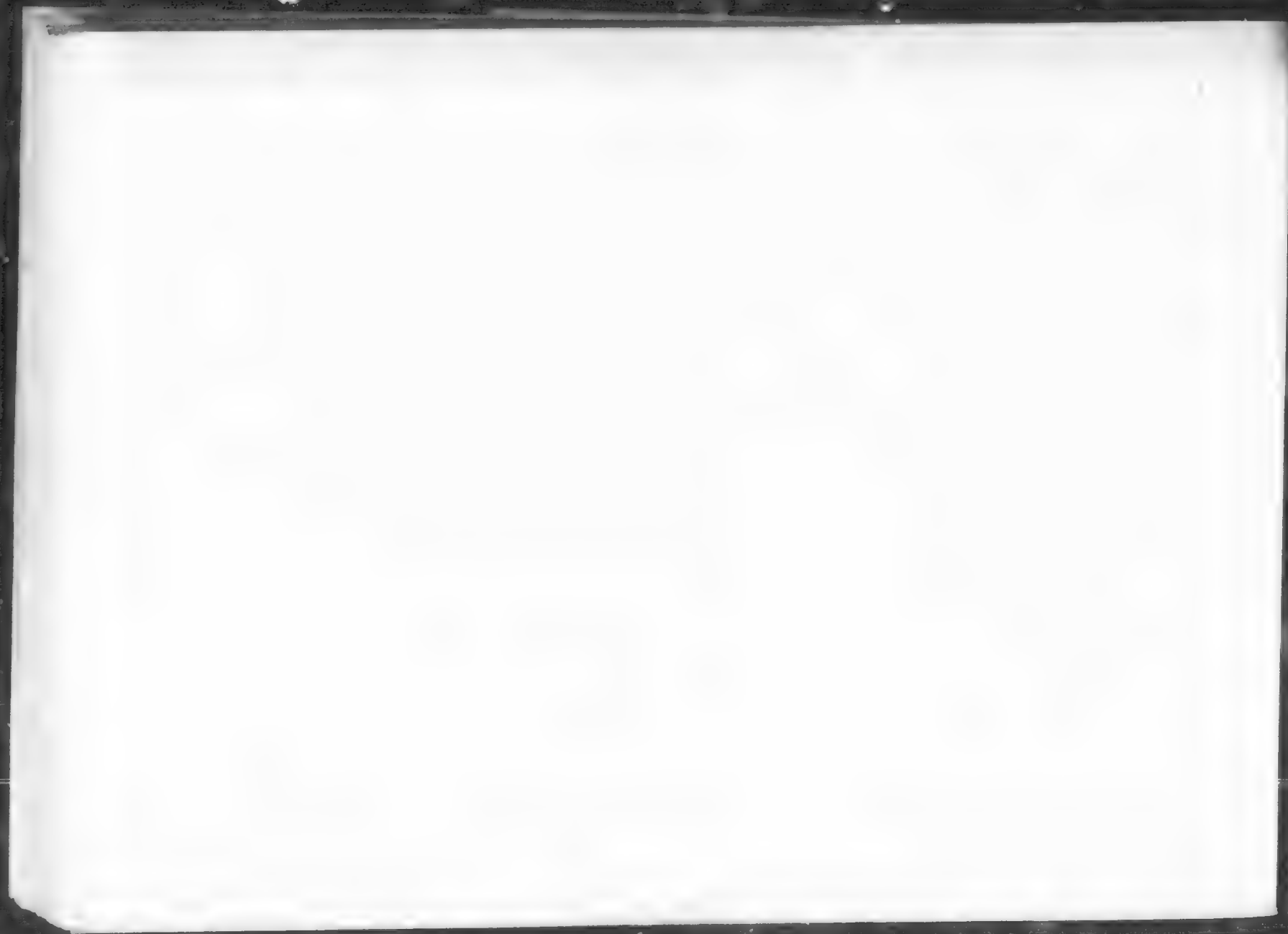
Whimble, ripple, gurgle, babble
 Liquid lays the lilies know !
 Upward to the deep dark basin
 Border'd round with tufty sod,
 Where the swallow dips her pinion,
 And the angler trails his rod.

Yet farther along,
 Where the valley grows narrow,
 I flash like the lightning,
 I shoot like an arrow !
 Ha ! ha ! and I shout
 In the freedom I love ;
 The clouds grow amazed,
 As they mantle above !
 When roaring in thunder,
 The wild leap I take,
 The giant trees wonder,
 And tremble and quake ;
 But as I rush past them,
 I fling, in my play,
 O'er branches low-bending,
 A wreath of my spray ;
 And then my sun-lover,
 With cheek all aglow,

Doth gaze with such ardor,
 I blush him a bow !

Now onward and upward you tread by my side,
 Till the great hoary mountains are seen :
 Through ages, and ages, and ages, my tide
 Hath scoop'd out that fearful ravine !
 Then on to the wind-whisp'ring forest, whose
 sod
 The foot of no venturous pilgrim hath trod,
 But where, by the gleam of the stars, you may see
 The slow stealthy panther come gliding to me,
 Or the deer from her covert stoop over and shrink
 From her shade in my depths as she pauses to
 drink.

Still forward you struggle — the forest is pass'd ;
 My own native mountain lifts proudly at last, —
 My own native mountain whose peak is a throne,
 Where reigns the Ice-Father eternal and lone,
 Who dreams not of earth at his measureless height,
 But holds with the planets communion of light !
 And now you may rest by my cool cavern door,
 As you hear the drip, drip, — drip, drip on the
 floor ;



Through shadows you peer, and the dank breath
inhale,

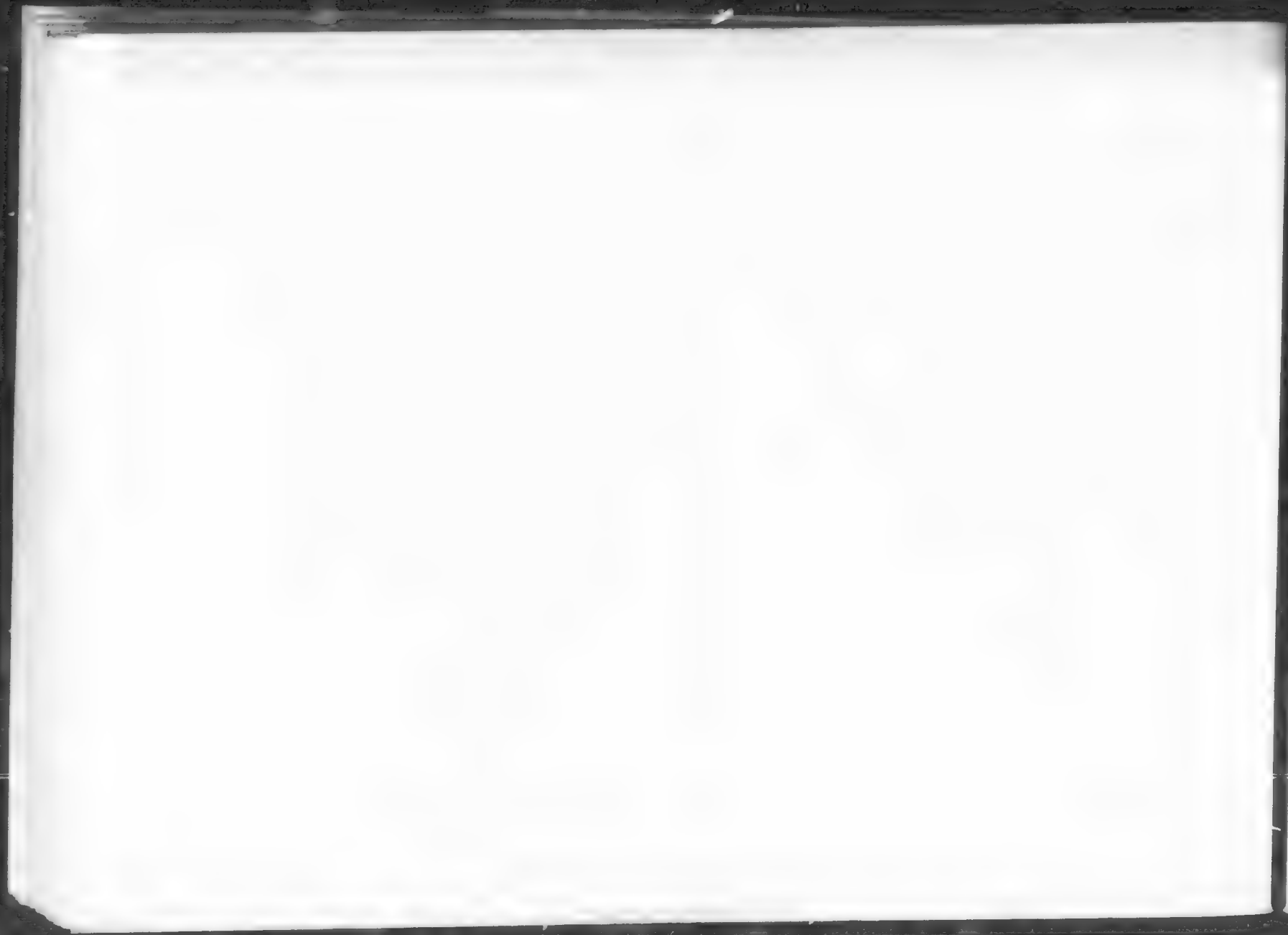
Where spectres of ages stand silent and pale !
No farther ! Beyond, in the bowels of earth,
Where coy rubies blush, is the place of my birth :
Where diamonds sparkle, and silver and gold,
In mansions of beauty, 'mid marvels untold.

Flow on, queenly River,
While mountains endure :
As bounteous and pure
As Nature, the giver !
Roll down to the sea,
In thy far-winding way :
From tincture of clay
Thy spirit is free, —
And forever will rise
In vesture of white,
To bathe in the light
Of the sapphire skies !

NOW.

Oh, tell us not, young minstrel, —
With thy harp of silent string,
' And thy hope-forsaken visage, —
"There is nothing now to sing."
While a blue sky bends above thee,
And a heart is left to love thee,
Oh, tell us not, young minstrel, there is nothing
now to sing !

At the awful shrines of Nature
Has thy reverent spirit bow'd ?
Have you seen the deep in tempest,
And the mountain through the cloud ?
Have you heard your heart's quick paces
In the lone and silent places, —
And beats it but to murmur, "There is nothing
now to sing" ?



Is there nothing great, heroic, —
 Nothing noble in thy kind?
 Is the soul without her pinions,
 And the world without her mind?
 Is no pleading voice to move thee,
 And no worthy cause to prove thee?
 Oh think, before you murmur, "There is nothing
 now to sing!"

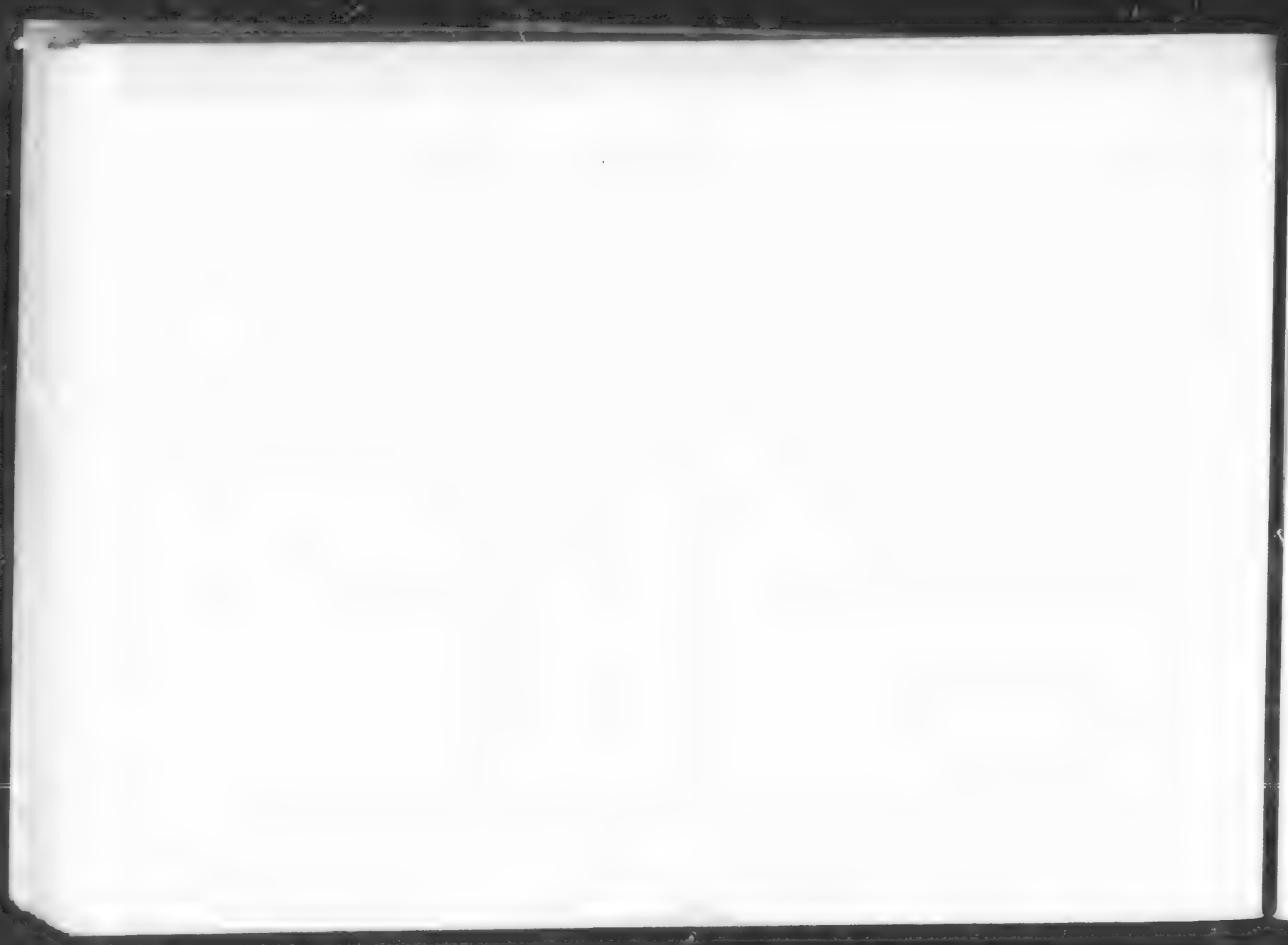
Who crown the Past forever
 In her halo-circled state,
 Save the souls that battled bravely
 In the strifes that made them great?
 And all the thrilling story
 Of their greatness and their glory
 Is but the very prelude of the song that you may
 sing!

Then deem not Thine as idle
 As a taper in the day, —
 Be it true to that is truthful,
 It may never pass away;
 For all the golden tissue
 Of man's labor is the issue
 Of minds the world thought dreaming when they
 never ceased to sing.

One sang for fame and glory,
 One for truth and heaven above;
 One sang for light and freedom,
 One for beauty and for love:
 Each at first the word's derision,
 Till the years unseal'd the vision,
 And they're now among the godlike for the
 songs that they did sing!

Sow thy seed, O husbandman!
 What though others reap:
 It will burst the shell and rise,
 Sip the dew and kiss the skies, —
 Sow thy seed, and sleep.

In thy labors thou shalt live, —
 Dust alone is dead, —
 Ever falls the shine and rain,
 Ever springs the golden grain;
 All the worlds are fed.



ALCOHOL.

Down in the realms of endless woe,
 They held a council long ago;
 And round their chief the dark fiends came,
 Crown'd with diadems of flame.
 "Peers," said Satan, "Powers of Hell,
 I charge ye now that ye may tell
 In what the subtlest curses dwell:
 Where shall we search, where shall we find
 A thing with all the ills combined,
 To damn and desolate mankind —
 A million-essence that unites
 All crimes and curses, pains and blights, —
 One which may seal the human fate?
 Tell me, infernal Powers of Hate!"
 Then groan'd a horrid murmur round,
 Like far-off thunder in the sound,
 Or gaunt and famish'd beasts when they
 Glare baleful on their helpless prey.
 Growl'd one, "Here's Famine's essence sore,
 'Twill gnaw man's vitals to the core,
 And make him do the deed of death

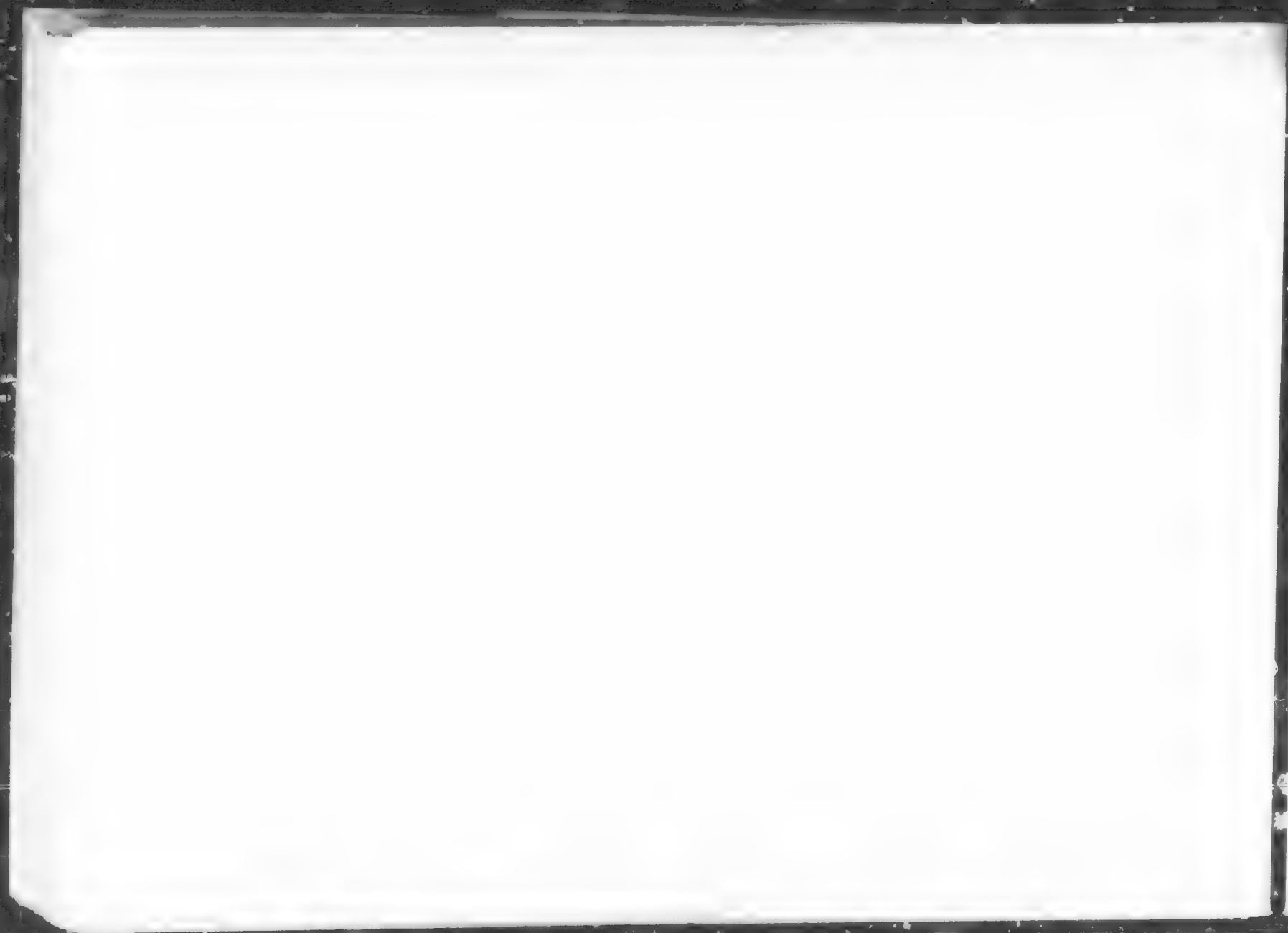
That he may gasp another breath."
 "'Tis well! 't is well!" each demon cries,
 And sparkles flash from flaming eyes.
 Another hiss'd, "This poison'd dart
 Is forged to pierce the human heart;
 'Twill make man grovel in the dust
 In all the beastliness of lust!"
 "'Tis well! 't is well!" each demon screams,
 And fiercer still each eye-ball gleams.
 "And this," another howl'd with glee,
 "Contains the juice of misery:
 War, bloody War! — how red it flows!
 This cup brims o'er with human woes!
 'Twill wring the tears from orphans' eyes,
 Like rain from out the wintry skies;
 'Twill rive the widow's heart, and send
 Uncounted myriads to their end."
 "'Tis well! 't is well! Be this the curse:
 No fiend in hell can wish for worse!"
 "Fiends!" roar'd a demon with a yell
 That shiver'd through the caves of hell, —
 "Away with all your aches and pains,
 Your famine, war, and winter rains!
 See what this grinning skull contains!
 We brew'd it in the deepest hell,

And know 't will work the mischief well :
 The essence this of every woe,
 Of every crime that demons know, —
 All-potent in this skull you'll find
 The sov'reign Curse of humankind :
 In this the Dew of Hell you see,
 And Alcohol its name shall be !"
 At first deep silence reign'd throughout ;
 Then roll'd one wild, discordant shout, —
 " 'Tis done ! 'tis done ! Be this the curse ;
 No fiend in hell can hope for worse !"
 Up at the heavens, his scepter'd fist
 Then Satan shook, and howl'd and hiss'd
 Through gnashing teeth, " Now, if you can,
 Protect and save you wretched Man.
 Devise some way by which you may
 Pluck from my grasp the pamper'd clay."
 Then, turning to the fiends, he said,
 " Haste, haste ! and let him be your head, —
 Your chief, — who bears the Cup of Death ;
 And like the simoom's scorching breath,
 Sweep earth, until nor track nor trace
 Of God shall mark the human race."
 So swarm'd they forth, and thus began
 The curse of Alcohol on Man.

STEAM.

THROUGH GRANDFATHER'S SPECTACLES.

Oh, how you plague me with your whirr and puff,
 Thou cloud-compelling, all-propelling Steam !
 Of thee I've seen and felt and heard enough,
 Heaven knows ! since many a sweet, romantic
 dream
 (That Shakespeare truly tells us is the stuff
 We're made of) hast thou scatter'd with thy
 scre
 Thou rude intruder of my sylvan shade !
 (The F. R. R. is through my orchard laid.)
 I grant that thou art mighty, and hast wrought
 Great changes in the land, and given to man
 A superhuman magnitude, and brought
 The limits of the world within a span ;
 But which of all the virtues owes thee aught ?
 Is human nature purer, loftier than
 When winds were made the objects of devotion,
 And holy rites appeased the god of ocean ?



What though with fiendish yell thou dost outstrip
 The panting gales, hast thou not stript away
 One-half life's fancies? — Call you *that* a ship, —
 Yon clanking, reeking, flaming forge, I pray?
 Where are the snowy sails that swell and dip?
 The whistling ropes, tall tops, and pennons gay,
 And all so graceful, docile, fair and free,
 That men have ever called a ship a *she*?

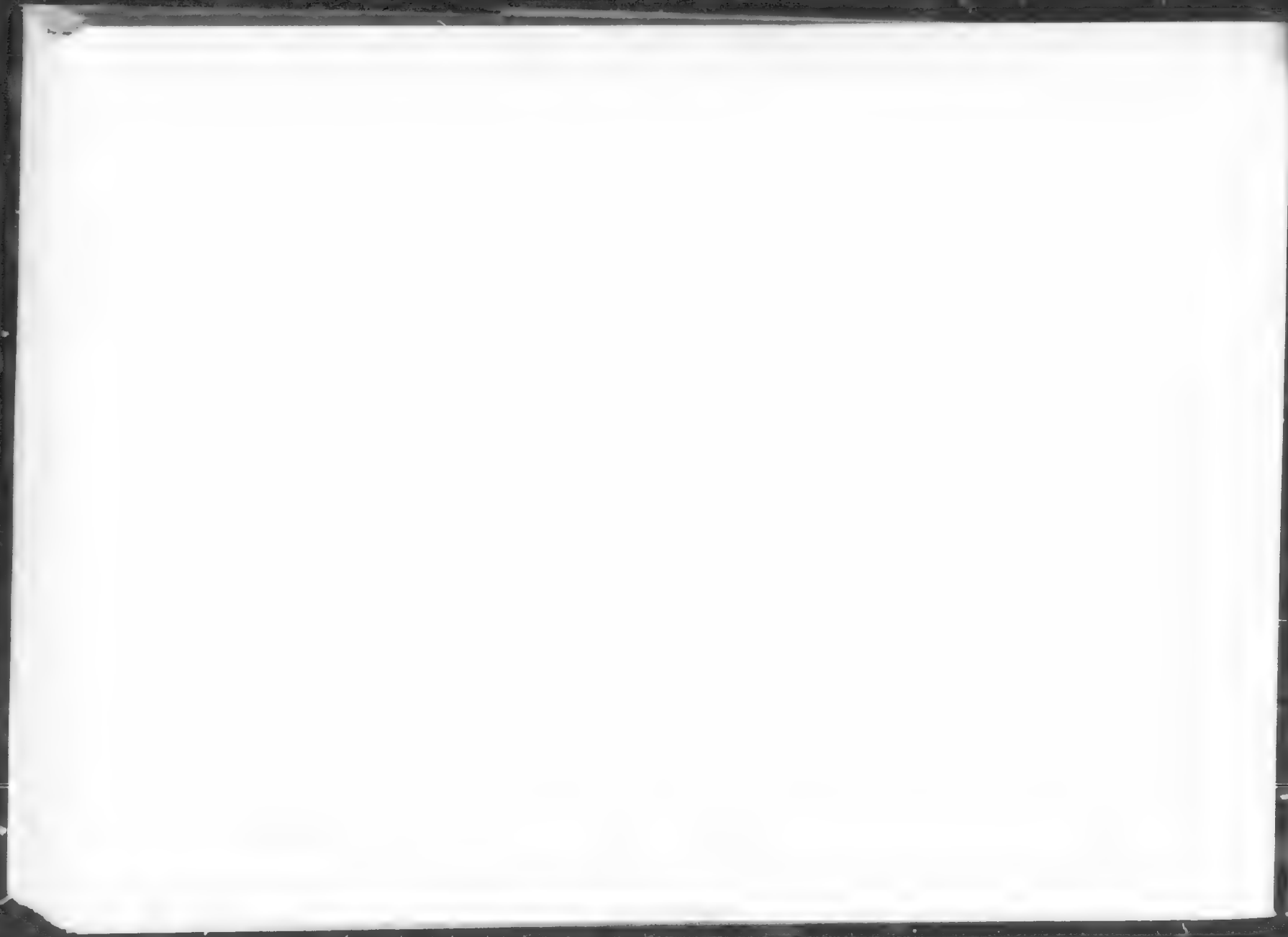
What though thou dost defy both time and space,
 And shoot one like an arrow from a bow, —
 Should every little ramble be a race,
 Pack'd in and whistled off, where'er we go
 As though in sooty Satan's hot embrace,
 And hurried shrieking to the shades below?
 Whate'er thy deeds, on this there is no cavil, —
 Thou hast destroy'd the poetry of travel!

No quiet country-road by hedge or streams;
 No pretty scenes to give the journey zest;
 No overarching trees through which day's beams
 Sift down in golden threads on nature's vest;
 No loit'ring up the hill, no drowsy dreams;
 No warbling birds, no thymy breeze, no rest;
 No harmless gossip, but some seedy chap —
 Some scandal-monger — strains his aural flap!

Then, where 's the wayside inn for which we sigh'd
 In our young days, — with hospitable door,
 With chirping landlord and his buxom bride?
 The glowing hearth, the nicely-sanded floor,
 The downy bed, the larder well-supplied,
 The pewter pot with nectar foaming o'er,
 The sidelong-glancing maiden's blooming cheek,
 That made one wish the storm might last a week!

Where are the coach-and-fours? the jolly guards?
 The muffled drivers with their wheezy jokes?
 The gabled taverns with their spacious yards
 Alive with all those quaint and curious folk, —
 Monks, palmers, pedlers, highwaymen, and bards,
 In hose and doublet, steeple-hat and cloak?
 Give thee; and you, for aught I care, may go,
 In forty winks, from here to Jericho!

I weep with a smile on my lip,
 I laugh with a tear on my cheek;
 But half that I feel I cannot reveal,
 And vain are the words that I speak.



APRIL.

I SEE the white wreaths dwindle down
 To little mounds of icy mire ;
 I see the hill-sides bare and brown,
 The swelling buds upon the brier ;
 I see in many a sunny spot
 The tender spears of verdure rise :
 I see young Spring return, — but not
 The form that ravish'd once mine eyes.

 I hear the bluebird's cheery call ;
 The thrush in yonder bosky grove ;
 I hear the freed brooks' murmuring fall ;
 I hear the cooing of the dove ;
 I hear the plashing on the pane ;
 The distant thunder on the shore ;
 I hear the voice of Spring again, —
 But *her* sweet accents nevermore.

 I feel the warm winds freshly blow
 Athwart the fields that still retain

Some trace of last year's wealth and glow,
 Through winter snow and autumn rain ;
 I feel the pulse of Nature bound
 Beneath my foot where'er I tread, —
 But neither touch, nor sight, nor sound
 Can give me back my sainted dead !

Now to our God and King,
 Loud let our anthems ring ;
 Praise and rejoice !
 O'er all our mighty land,
 Where only freemen stand,
 One now in heart and hand,
 Join every voice !

Long may sweet Peace again
 Over the Union reign, —
 Prosp'rous and grand !
 Smile every mountain side ;
 Bloom every prairie wide ;
 Faith, Hope, and Love abide ;
 God bless our Land !

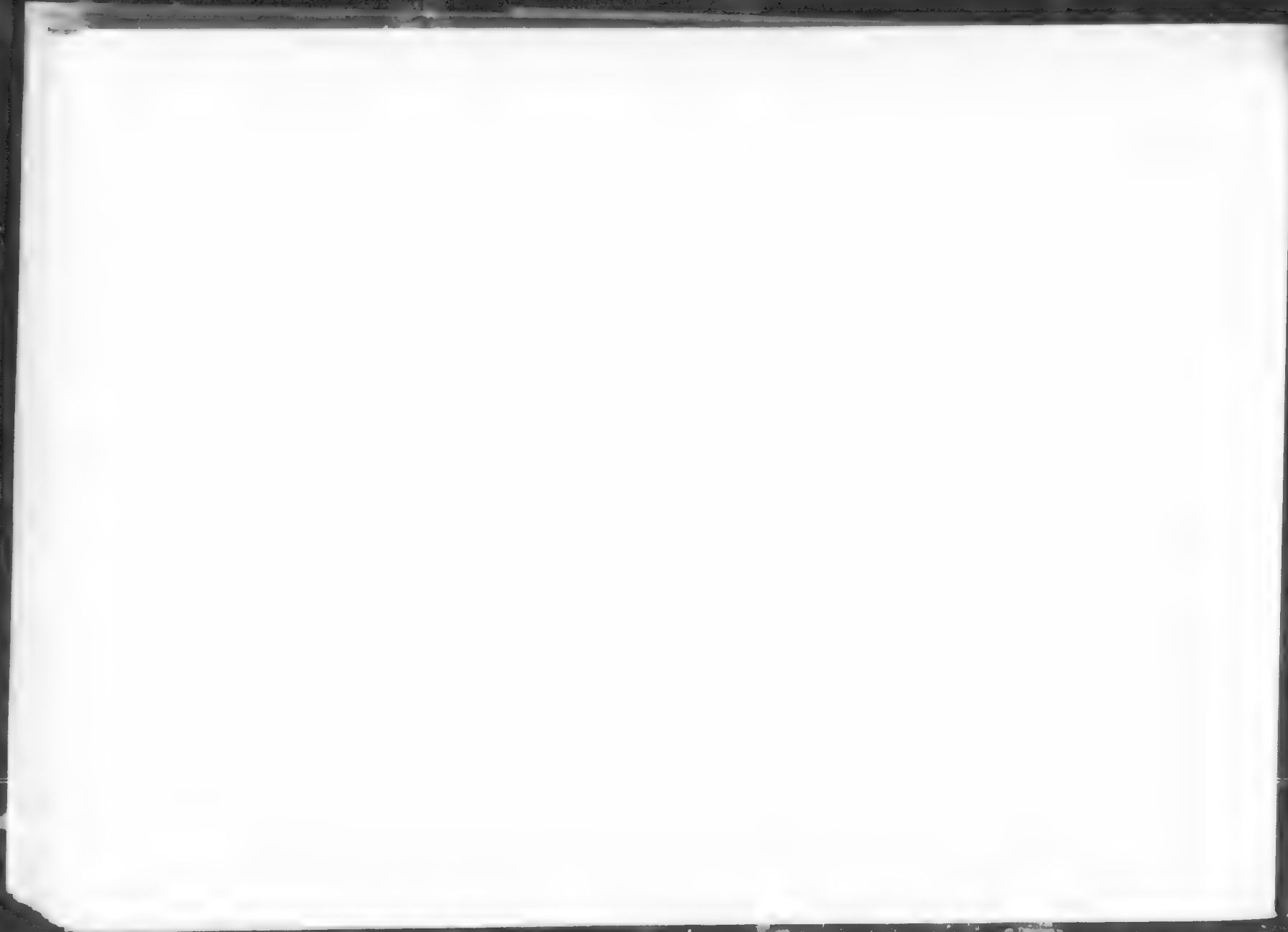


BETTY AND THE BEAR.

In a pioneer's cabin out West, so they say,
 Some untimely intruder gain'd access, one day,
 And made such a racket, he 'woke from his sleep
 The lord of the mansion, who ventured to peep,
 Thro' a crack, in the kitchen, to see what was there,
 When he found, to his grief, 't was a grizzly bear!
 "My gracious!" he yell'd to his slumb'ring frow,
 "Thar's a bar in the kitching as big as a caow!"
 "A what?" "Why, a bar!" "Well, murder 'm
 — quick!"
 "Yes, Betty, I will, ef you'll git me a stick."
 So Betty pop't out and the poker she seized,
 While her man shut the door, and ag'inst it he
 squeez'd!
 As Betty belabor'd the beast with her blows, —
 Now on his forehead and now on his nose, —
 Her man thro' the keyhole kept snouting within,
 "Well done, my brave Betty! now hit 'm agin!
 A jab in the stummick! — a dab on the snout! —
 Now poke with the poker and poke his eyes out!

Don't be a bit scart of 'm, Betty, my dear;
 Don't be a bit scart — fur, ye know, I am here!"
 So with poking and jabbing, poor Betty alone
 At last laid Sir Bruin as dead as a stone.
 Then when the old man saw the bear was no more,
 He ventured to poke his own nose out the door,
 And there was the grizzly stretch'd on the floor.
 'T was only a cub; but no matter for that:
 He pull'd on his boots and he clapt on his hat,
 And off to the neighbors he hasten'd, to tell
 All the wonderful things that that morning befell;
 And he publish'd the marvellous story afar, —
 How "ME an' my betty jes' slaughter'd a bar!
 Oh yes! Come an' see! all the neighbors hev sid it;
 Jes' see what We did, ME an' betty — We did it!"
 But, alas, all the neighbors were perfectly knowing
 That *she* did the business and *he* did the blowing.

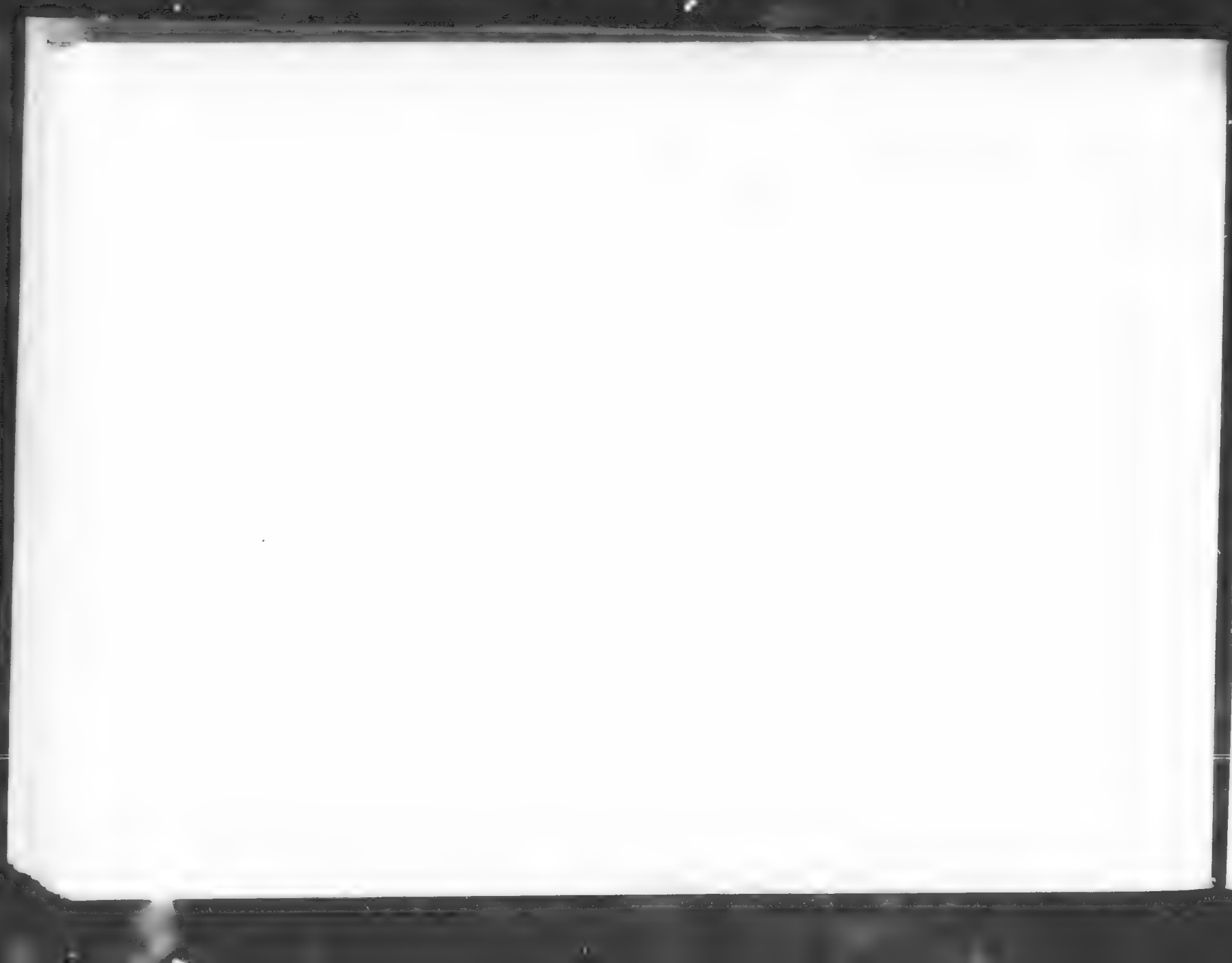
Ah! who does not see that the age is at hand,
 When man will no longer be lord in the land?
 When the women shall lay by the needle, and take
 The sceptre and sword, the plough and the rake!
 Then, oh, what a day of deliverance, when
 The editor lays down his wearisome pen,
 The mason his trowel, the joiner his square,



And the hodman no longer his burden shall bear!
 When the soldier shall carry his musket no more,
 The sailor repose, and the constable snore!
 When the calker shall throw by his iron and maul,
 And the poor grimy cobbler give up his awl!
 When Man, who has struggled for 6000 years,
 In the sweat of his forehead, in torture and tears,
 Shall rest from his labor, his worry and strife,
 And resign all his cares to his strong-minded wife!
 O Boys! what an era of tranquil delights, —
 No envy and malice, no mean little spites,
 No sin and no sorrow, no neighborly fights,
 No hearts full of hatred, nor backs full of bites, —
 When Woman, at last, shall be given her rights!
 And then how delicious for you and for me,
 To sit all the morning a-sipping our tea!
 With nothing to do from dawning to night, —
 No speeches to spout, no sermons to write,
 No bargains to make, no battles to fight,
 No kindlings to split, and no fires to light!
 And only to handle a knife or a ladle;
 Or p'rhaps, — very rarely — to joggle the cradle:
 I say, very rarely; for, long before then,
 The boys and the girls will be women and men,
 And some *Mrs.* Barnum will show with her lumber

The cradle in which the Last Baby did slumber!
 So, with no "encumbrance" to trouble them then,
 Of course, they'll be all the more kind to the men,
 — The poor little men, the dear little men,
 The tender-eyed, soft-hearted, soft-headed men!

But if there be some of the ladies who may
 Keep poking round house in the primitive way,
 Regardless of what the strong-minded may say,
 Just list, if you please, to this bit of advice,
 And *you'll* find t'will tend to keep everything nice:
 Remember, there 's nothing more easy than man
 To manage, if ruled on a sensible plan;
 But if you 're not willing or able to do it,
 You 'd better avoid him, or else you may rue it.
 Just go the right way, and you need n't be *skeer'd*;
 For what is a man but a boy with a beard?
 The same at all seasons, in sunshine or rain,
 You must seldom be weary, and never complain;
 When sickness afflicts him, serenely endure
 His grunts and his groans till effected 's the cure;
 Should he smoke his cigar in the very best room,
 Complacently smile, "What a heavenly perfume!
 Oh, surely, 't is fit for angelical noses!
 And see! — on the carpet, the ashes of roses!"



How much better this than to croak like a frog,
 Or scream like a vixen, "Get out, you great hog!"
 (A libel on hogs; for, whatever they do,
 They never will smoke, nor, certainly, chew.)
 Let never his slightest desires be crost;
 But keep him contented, whatever the cost.
 Be sure that the dinner is cook'd to his liking,
 And have the meal served while the hour is striking.
 If he should be surly, why, don't *you* be pert;
 And be careful the buttons are all on his shirt!
 For, you know, 'tis enough to make anyone grieve,
 To stand shiv'ring, like Adam himself, while his
 Eve
 Is finding a button to sew on his sleeve!
 And, lastly, no matter how many your cares,
 To *him* give the credit of killing the bears!
 You say such devotion may shorten your days:
 Why, of course! but he'll cover your tombstone
 with praise:
 "To die like a martyr — she ask'd nothing better,
 And kindly her husband consented to let her;
 The joy of his bosom, the light of his life,
 There never was known a more amiable wife."
 Such praises will moisten the wayfarer's eyes,
 Till at last shall be written below, "Here he lies."

CAPTAIN GREEN'S LOG-BOOK.

Rough and rugged as a bear-skin,
 But as warm, was Captain Green,
 Sitting in the cosy cabin
 Of his gallant "Ocean Queen,"
 Smoothing out a wrinkled volume
 With a wondrous careful hand, —
 Seeming not to heed the distance
 We were rolling from the land.
 Now he nods and smiles and whispers,
 While his eye-lids overflow.
 "Captain, pardon me for asking
 What those hieroglyphics show?"
 And the captain drew his coat-sleeve
 O'er his face, and answer'd slow,
 "Well, this harryglifs, — you call it, —
 Is my log, if you must know!"
 Often had I heard of log-books
 Kept by sailors on the deep,
 But within the mystic volumes
 Never chanced to get a peep;

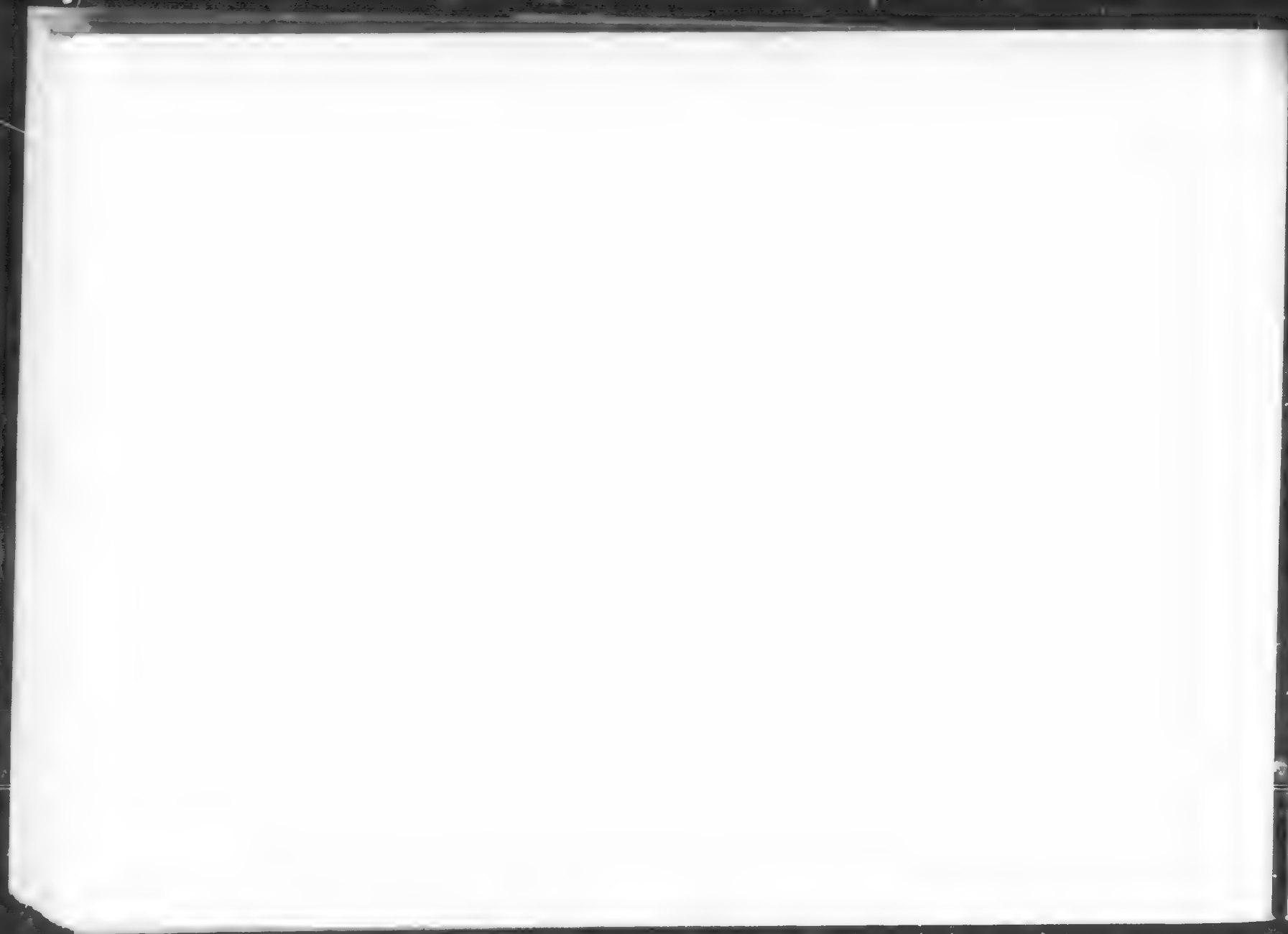


So I coax'd the son of Neptune
 Let me turn the record o'er:
 "Pshaw! 't is fill'd with rude, misshapen,
 Inky daubs, and nothing more!"
 "Ay, to you," said he, "they may be
 Blots and scratches on the sheet;
 But to me they speak a language
 Ever new and true and sweet;
 For they tell me of my cottage,
 Where the fire is burning bright,
 Where my little one is lisping
 Prayers for me, this stormy night.
 Very precious is this volume,
 Full of houses, trees, and men!
 See this picture of a sailor! —
 Don't you know it? — look again!
 Can't you see myself depicted,
 With a child upon my knee?
 That's my little maid, — my Mattie, —
 Who did everything you see!
 Every scratch and mark and figure
 Is the sign of Mattie's hand:
 Not a brighter little lassie
 Lives, I vow, in any land!
 Why, I never cross the ocean,

But she adds a sheet to this,
 Sparkling with her precious pictures;
 Every picture is a kiss!
 Not a time I turn them over,
 But I feel her velvet cheek
 Pressing mine" . . . And here the captain
 Grew so hoarse he scarce could speak.
 "Ah! you do not know what comfort
 From these blotted leaves I reap,
 When between me and my Mattie
 Rolls the cold and lonely deep!"

A CLOUDED JUNE.

WHAT ails thee, June, that thou dost pout and
 frown,
 And darkly moan in melancholy songs, —
 Bearing upon thy brows a cloudy crown,
 And not the rose-wreath that to thee belongs?
 With folded hands, pale cheek, and downcast eyes,
 Thou comest a Niobe, all tears and sighs!



In thy young sister April we expect
 Such wayward ways, for she is in her teens;
 But seen in thee, who art the bride-elect,
 In sooth we know not what such conduct means;
 So churlishly dost thou withhold thy boon,
 Though rich and rare thy promise, lovely June!

Long have we linger'd for thy warm embrace,
 And bravely battled through the wintry way;
 In expectation kissed thy glowing face,
 While constant hope illumed each sunless day;
 O'er howling storms we heard thy sweet notes gush,
 And 'neath the snows beheld thy roses blush.

Now here at last, thou bride-month of the year,
 Thy face we see; yet how unlike our dreams!
 Since not in wedding garb dost thou appear,
 Ne from thy woeful eyen the love-light gleams:
 In sable weeds, — a sad funereal train, —
 Thou movest with all thine hours athwart the plain.

Oh, virgin June! yet deign awhile to shine;
 For tireless Time is ever on the move:
 But thirty days of all the year are thine;
 Oh, then, should each be over-fill'd with love,

In shady groves, deep dells, and forest bowers,
 Bedight with garlands gay of blushing flowers!

On far-off lakes with islets studded o'er,
 By flood and field and breezy mountain-steep,
 Or where green billows dash upon the shore,
 Or spectral icebergs gleam along the deep,
 Or, stretch'd supine beneath ancestral trees,
 By babbling brooklet lull'd and murmuring bees.

Like all that we have cherish'd, soon wilt thou
 Fade out and mingle with the dreamy past!
 The canker feeds upon thy glory now, —
 The joys of earth were never meant to last:
 But come; the meed of rarest days, you know,
 To thee is given: then, smile and prove it so!

HERE, on the brink of the river, I bear
 Lonely sorrow and loveless care!
 There, beneath that tranquil breast,
 Sweet oblivion, endless rest!
 Oh, who has not seen, with a thrill and shiver,
 His own white face in the glassy river?



SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

LISTEN, brother ; pause and listen !
 Hear you not, I pray,
 Murmurs like a mighty tocsin
 Swinging far away, —
 Slow and solemn, "Coming ! coming !"
 Nearer day by day ?

Over all the din and clangor
 Of this life around, —
 Rush of commerce, roar of battle, —
 That our ears confound :
 Tolling — tolling, deep and awful,
 Swells the solemn sound !

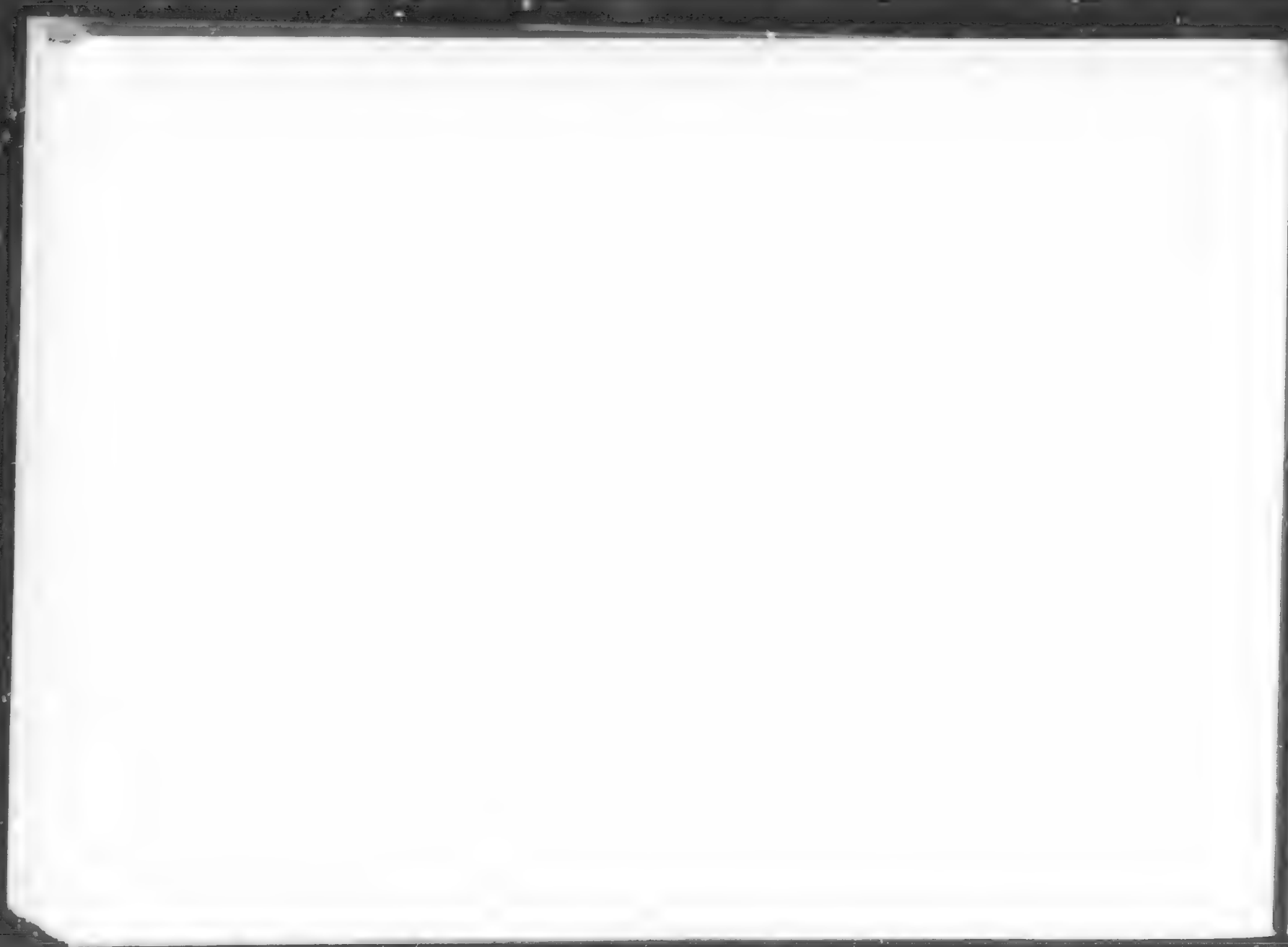
Oh ! that mystic Something coming,
 Earth has never known !
 When, or how, or what its mission
 Is with Him alone ;
 But the Soul, devoutly list'ning,
 Hears the monotone.

Is it some all-potent Besom
 That shall sweep away
 Every idol that we worship, —
 Council we obey, —
 All the dross and dust of ages
 From the light of day ?

Who can tell ! But fear you never,
 You that love the Right ;
 Tremble, traitor ! tyrant, cow'ring
 'Neath the pall of night :
 Soon shall flash and flame around us
 God's eternal light !

"How shall I reach the Kingdom of Heaven ?"
 And a hundred guides are eager to lead ;
 But He himself, who knows my need,
 Tells me, "Within is the Kingdom of Heaven."

"But is there nothing to handle or see, —
 Priest nor worship — altar nor fane ?"
 And the voice of the Master comes again,
 "Lo, by its fruit, shall ye know the tree."



ANASTASIA.

HAD earth no charms for thee,
That thou, sweet soul, shouldst take the dusty way?
Did love not light thy steps with constant ray,
From tend'rest infancy?

Couldst thou no beauty see,
But such as mock'd thy purest maiden-dreams?
The flowers, the woods, the meadows, and the
streams, —

Were they not all for thee?

Or did thy spirit crave
Those other fields, where flowers forever blow, —
That many-mansion'd house, whose gate, we know,
Is narrow'd to the grave?

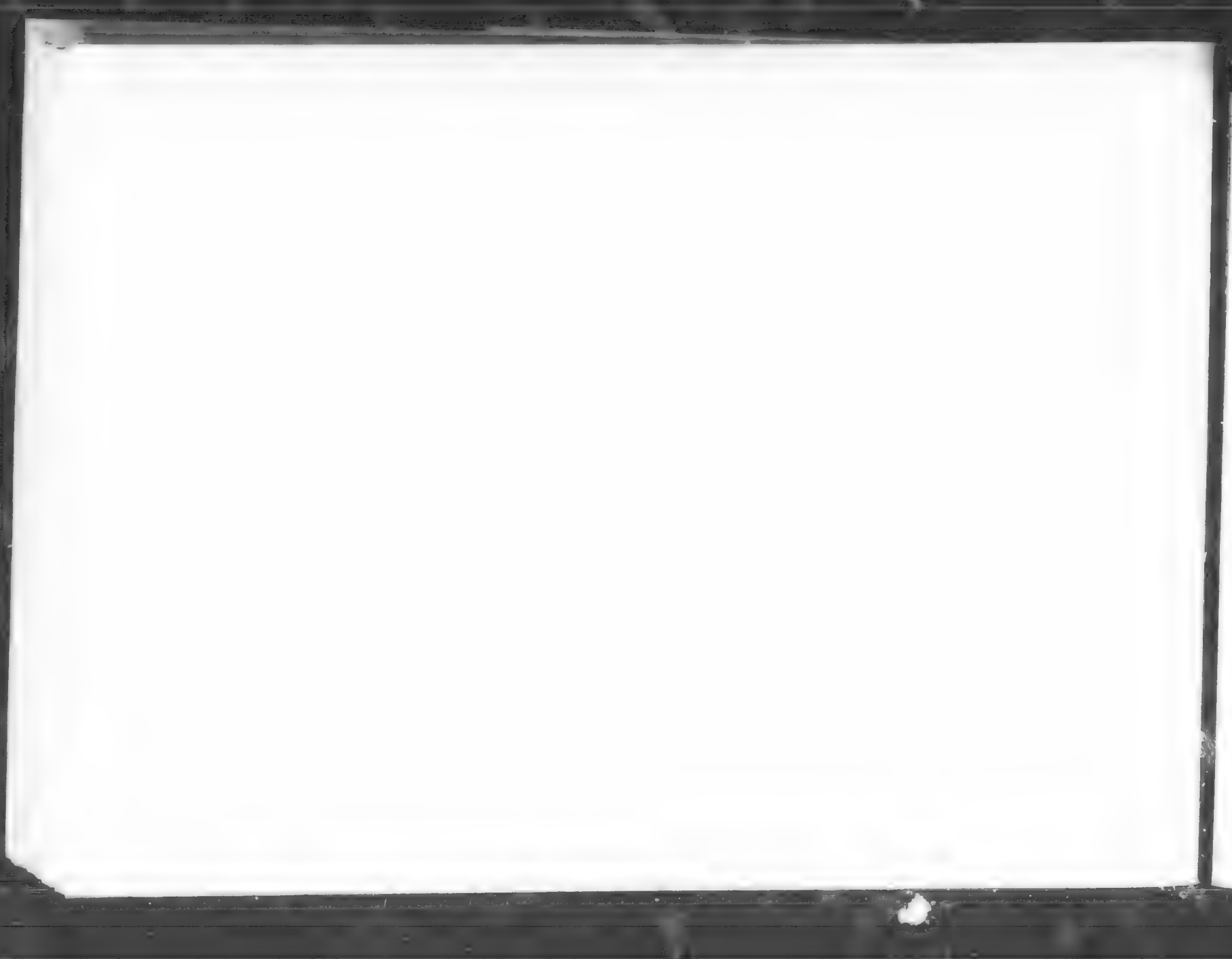
Hadst thou no lot below?
No chord responsive to earth's varied song?
No kindred feeling with the needy throng
That crowd the courts of woe?

There's joy, high, holy joy
Reserved for those who conquer and believe, —
Ear may not hear, eye see, man's heart conceive,
Nor envious death destroy!

Such now is thine! Then why
Should sombre grief sit brooding on the soul,
And all the waves of sorrow o'er us roll?
For thee, 't was gain to die!

GRAY HAIRS.

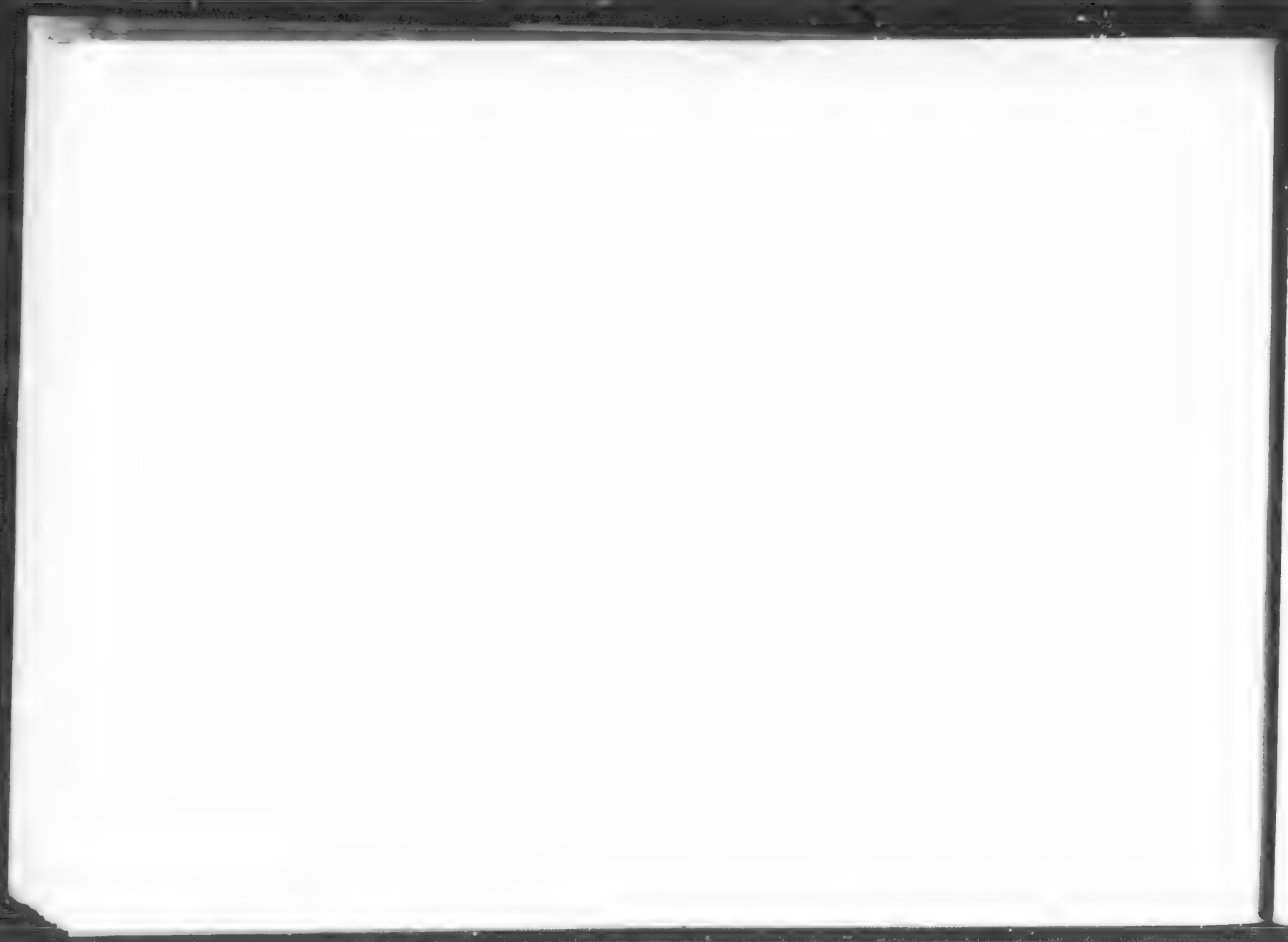
So you have found a silver hair?
Oh, no! it is the light, my fair,
That falls, you see, in such a way,
It lends the lock a gleam of gray.
How like your sex to pry and peep!
'Tis time those eyes were closed in sleep.
My love, I have these leaves to fill
Ere twelve to-night. Another still!
There — that's enough: 'tis as you say, —
I own that hair is somewhat gray;
But wither'd leaves are often seen



In June, when all the rest is green.
 Another and another yet !
 Oh, what a teasing, pretty pet !
 You seem unconscious how it shoots,
 To have one's hairs pluck'd by the roots !
 And then, suppose you pluck'd them all,
 'T would not my vanish'd youth recall !
 There, there ! — the clock is striking ten !
 What ! must you torture me again ?
 The last, you say ? I'm glad to know it.
 I wish, my love, you were — a poet ;
 For then those silver hairs you find
 Would be a halo to your mind, —
 Each single spear, so pearly white,
 Gleam forth a ray of heavenly light, —
 A dim, ethereal, filmy glow, —
 A faint aureola, you know :
 The saints are always painted so.
 "Alas !" she sighs, "whene'er I see
 Those tell-tale hairs, I think, For me
 And for the birds that sweetly dream
 In yonder nest, perchance, they gleam :
 'T was toil and vigil — doubts and cares, —
 Not age, — that blanch'd those silver hairs !"

SONG OF THE RAIN.

'T is the rain ! the welcome rain !
 The sweet refreshing rain !
 The gushing, rushing, pattering, dripping rain !
 Oh, to wake up in the night
 To the music of the rain, —
 As it plashes on the shutters,
 As it gurgles in the gutters, —
 As it drums its merry marches
 On my hot and dusty pane !
 And to listen to the showers
 Through the solemn, sultry hours
 Come and go ;
 And to know
 That the faithful little flowers
 Did not lift their pleading eyes
 To the brazen, burning skies,
 All in vain,
 For the rain !
 And to know that in the valley,
 In the forest and the plain,



Are a thousand thousand famish'd things
 Rejoicing in the rain !
 That the meadows will be seen
 In their livery of green,
 As though sweet May awhile
 Had come again to smile ;
 That no more the shrunken river
 Is through dusty channel creeping ;
 But with laughing eddies dimpled,
 To the mother-wave is leaping.
 And to know this happy night,
 There are hearts of humble trust
 Thanking Him who sendeth rain
 On the evil and the just ;
 While from many a grateful eye,
 Are the pearls of blessing shed
 On little lips that whisper'd last,
 " Our Father . . . daily bread ! "

And to know that on the morrow, —
 With the first flush of the day, —
 What a cloud of anxious sorrow
 With the clouds will pass away, —
 With the rain, the gentle rain,
 The sweet refreshing rain,
 The gushing, rushing, pattering, dripping rain !

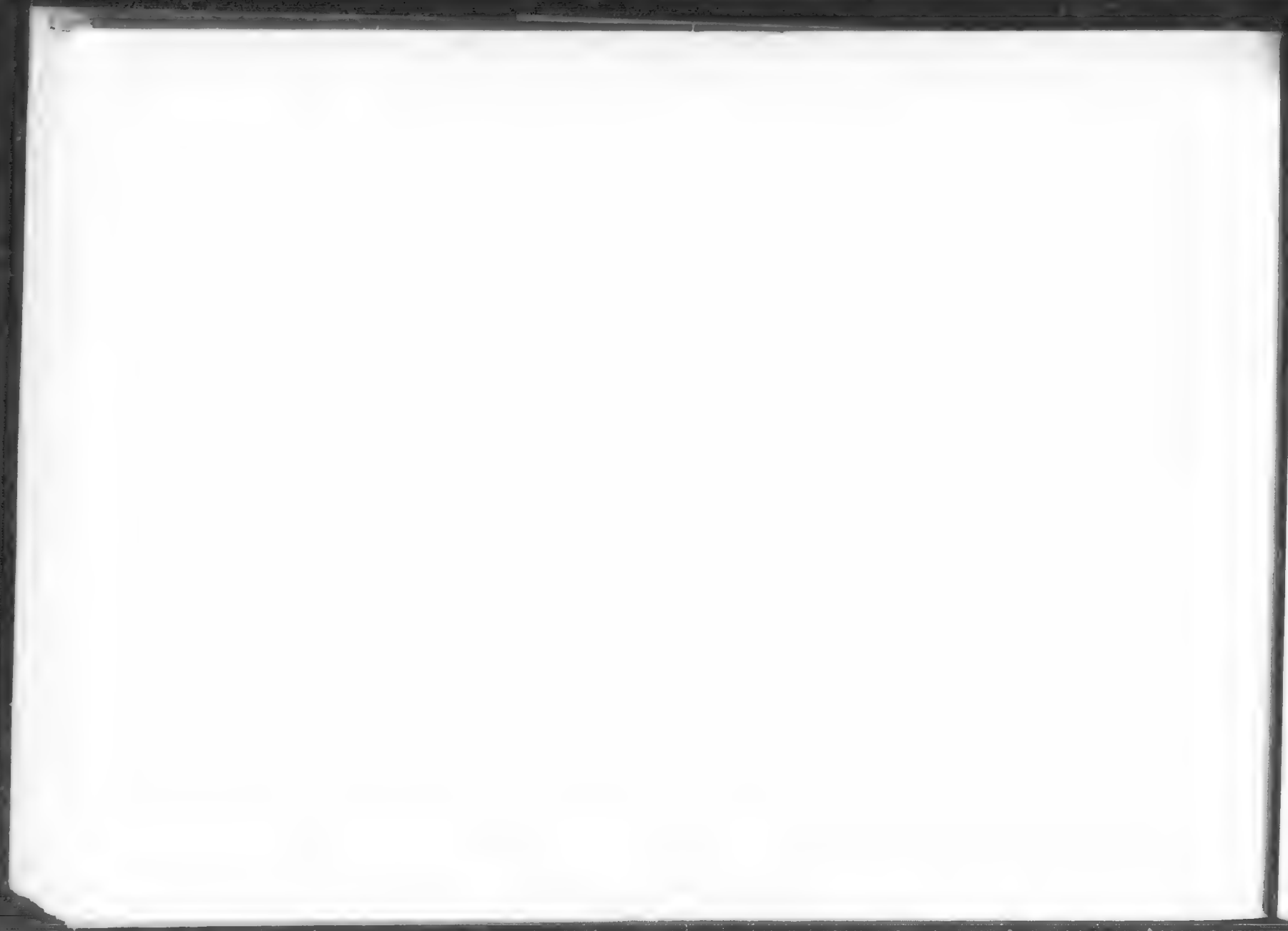
THE SEAL IN FROG POND.

LONE captive of the hyperborean main !
 Not without pity can I look on thee,
 And watch thy graceful motions, as, in vain,
 Thou seek'st thy fellows of the surging sea.

How strange to those large, liquid eyes of thine
 Must seem these shaven lawns and waving trees !
 This lakelet, so unlike thy native brine,
 Thus gently ruffled by th' autumnal breeze !

Dost thou not yearn to hear the Norther blow,
 And o'er the cold green billows sweep and howl,
 Where ice-fields whiten with the driving snow,
 And the huge rolling mountains grind and
 growl ?

Good to thy heart amphibious must it seem
 To have night's curtain spread the welkin o'er,
 When, undisturb'd, thou canst repose and dream
 Of Baffin's Bay and lonely Labrador ;



Or, wakeful, gaze aloft and recognize
 Thy faithful friends, Orion and the Bear,
 And sometimes boreal lights, which, in our skies,
 But seem poor ghosts of what in yours appear.

E'en as I gaze at thee, methinks I hear
 The thund'ring billows and the grinding floes,
 And see the cliffs their flinty foreheads rear,
 Obscure and awful through the blinding snows!

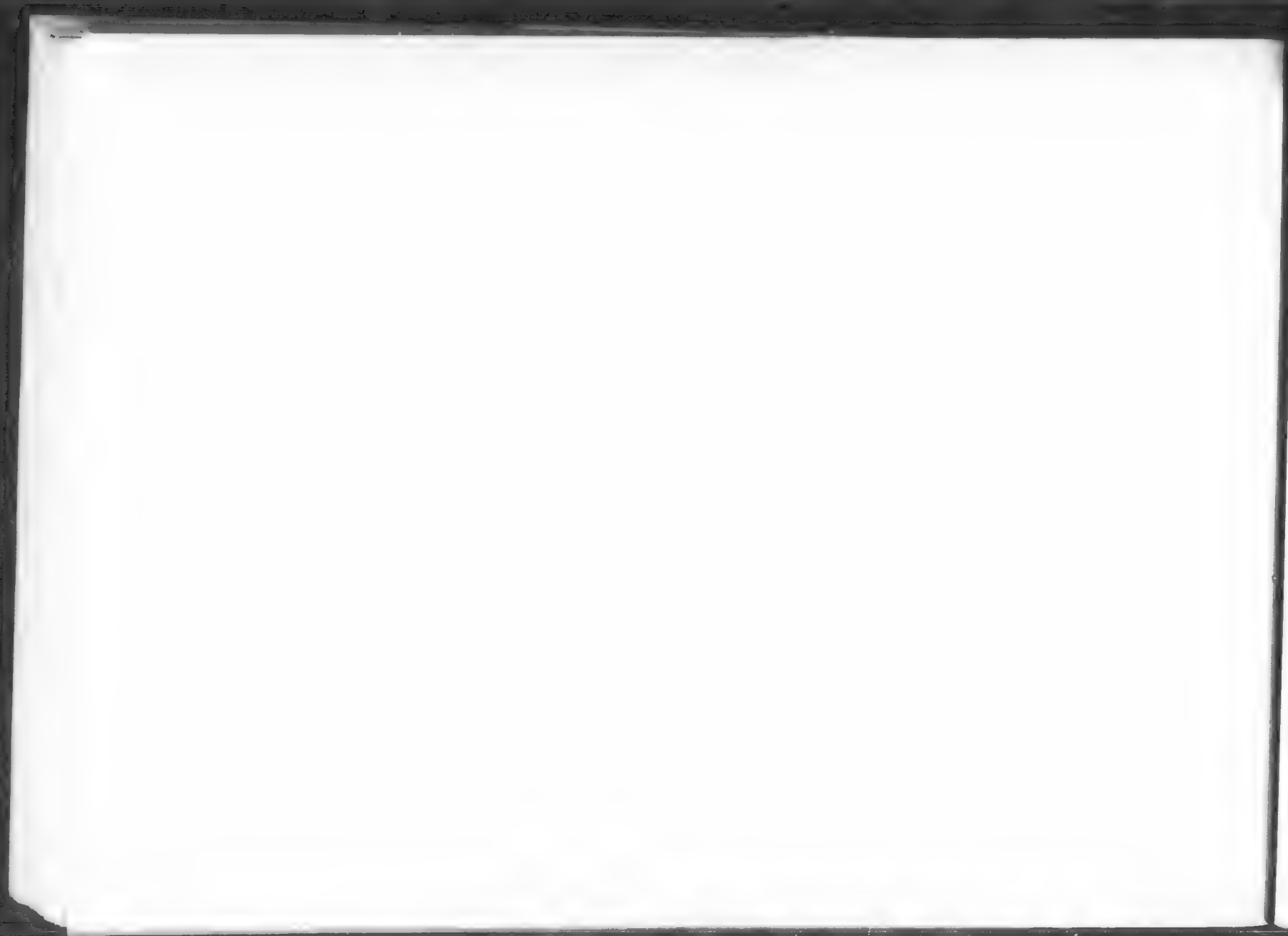
For I have view'd thy comrades of the main
 Disporting freely on their native strand, —
 In myriads dark'ning all the icy plain
 Along the stormy shores of Newfoundland.

It surely cannot be so passing sweet
 To hear a hundred voices shout and squeal, —
 What time thou show'st thy nose the air to greet,
 "Hi ya! see, there he is! the seal! the seal!"

Thou art no traitor to thy home and kind,
 Or willing trespasser on man's domain,
 That thou in durance vile shouldst be confined:
 I would, poor cousin, thou wert free again!
September, 1865.

"FOUND DEAD."

A GOLDEN light from the lofty hall
 Illumines the icy street;
 And many a delicate dancing foot
 Is tripping to melody sweet.
 The night is dark, the wind is high,
 Whirling the snow about;
 But as oft as a beautiful guest glides in,
 A river of light flows out, —
 A river of light and a gush of song
 That charm the ear and the eye
 Of the poor little maid and her brother who stand
 In their rags and shiver and sigh:
 "O brother! a beautiful thing it is
 To be rich and grand like these, —
 Such clothes to wear and music to hear,
 And have and do what you please;
 And never to know a want or a woe,
 Nor cold nor hunger to feel,
 Nor yet to beg at a hundred doors,
 Before you may taste of a meal!



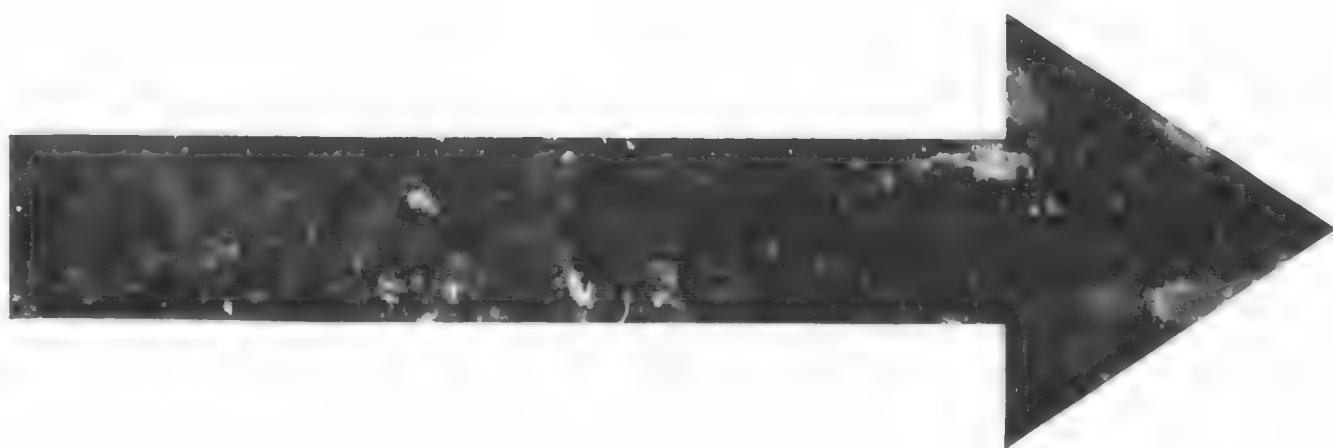
Oh, see that lady ent'ring now,
 What a beautiful dress she wears !
 Why, brother, I guess that it cost enough
 To keep us in plenty for years !
 Yes ; one of those things that sparkle so bright—
 Just look ! — only one ! — it is gold !
 She is gone. Well, wait for the next : don't cry :
 You may take my shawl if you're cold.
 Ah, well ; poor mother, before she died,
 She said she was going away
 To a city whose streets are paved with gold,
 And ever as bright as day, —
 A day without night and a clime without cold,
 To hunger and sorrow unknown !
 I foolishly thought to go with her, and cried
 When she said she must leave us, alone !
 But she said that if I was a good little girl,
 And kind and tender to you,
 That we, no matter how poor we be,
 Should come to that city too."

.
 The wintry morning is keen and gray,
 The snow lies deep on the ground ;
 Like spectres glare the shrouded lamps,
 And the watchman walks his round, —

He tramps along by the lofty hall :
 The music has ceased to trill ;
 The lights are out, the revellers gone,
 And all is silent and still. . . .
 "What, ho ! what is this ? A cat or a dog,
 That perish'd in frost or fight ?
 A cap, — a shawl, — a tuft of hair, —
 A hand ! " — Oh, horrible sight !
 But tears of pity are shed too late,
 That fall upon lifeless clay ;
 The children are walking the golden streets,
 With their angel-mother to-day.

THE EVENING PAIER.

SHADOWS descending,
 Labor is ending,
 Homeward are wending
 Weary ones all ;
 Fleeing with gladness
 Meanness and badness,
 Mammonite madness !
 Broken each thrall :



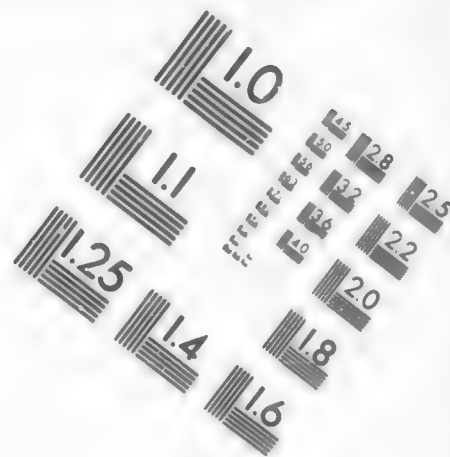
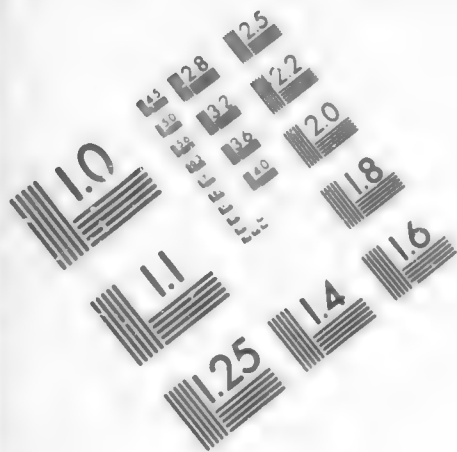
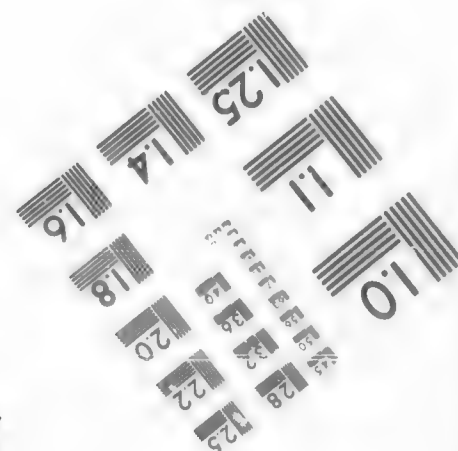
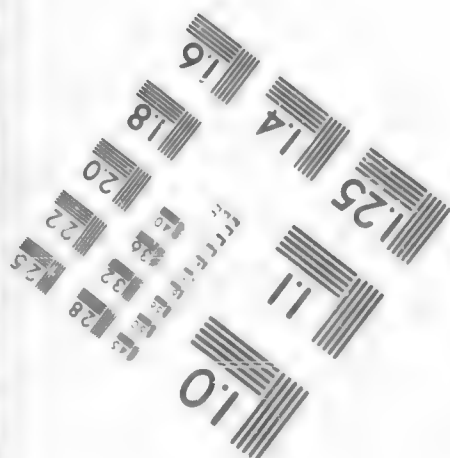
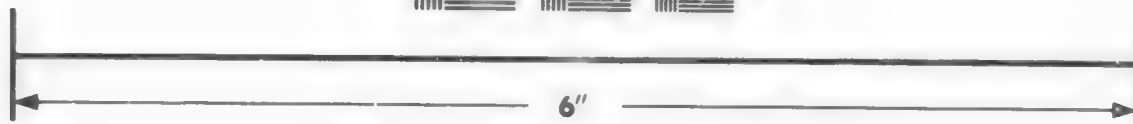
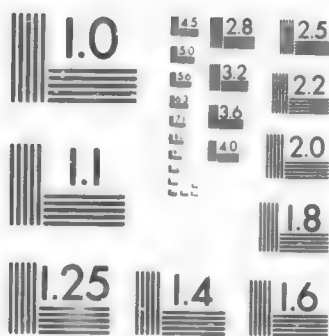


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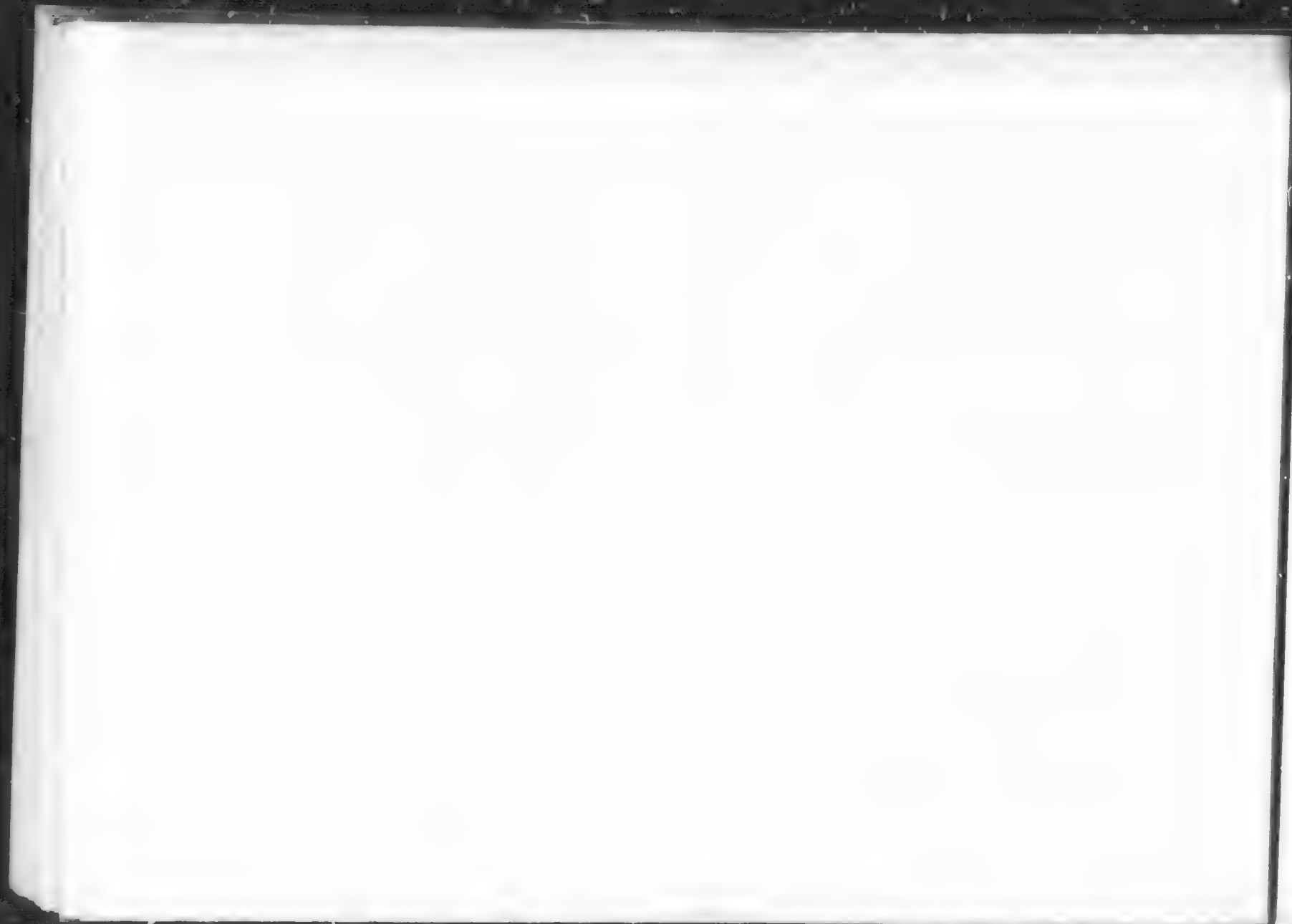


Rushing from day-book,
 Ledger and pay-book,
 Like a young May-brook
 Leaping to light !
 Sweet voices blessing them,
 Loved ones caressing them, —
 Come with the paper that comes with night !

Then for the Babel
 Round the tea-table !
 All who are able
 Let their tongues run, —
 Musical rattle,
 Infantile prattle,
 Gossip and tattle,
 Frolic and fun !
 While at the end there is
 Each pretty lip to kiss !
 Bachelors, losing this,
 Lose all delight :
 All it is worth to live,
 Best the world has to give
 Come with the paper that comes with night !

MY ROCKING-CHAIR.

THE wind is howling to enter my room,
 With many an aching care ;
 But I smile at the storms of time and clime,
 As I rock in my rocking-chair.
 And sprites and fays are hov'ring round,
 Filling the fragrant air ;
 And I dream such dreams as never are dreamt,
 Except in a rocking-chair.
 My heart grows large, that all the world
 May enter and welcome there ;
 And I bless e'en him who did me a wrong,
 As I rock in my rocking-chair !
 And I search for the doubts I had to-day ;
 They're gone ! — But how or where ?
 Like restless babes, they drop to sleep
 As I rock in my rocking-chair !
 And the dust and sweat of the weary way,
 And the burdens hard to bear,
 And the loss and the cross are all forgot,
 As I rock in my rocking-chair !



ONLY SHADOWS.

Why those timid glances peering
 Round the dimly-lighted hall?
 'Tis the faint and dying embers
 Casting shadows on the wall, —
 Only shadows — flitting shadows.

Yes, they seem to move and quiver,
 Like dumb spirits standing near;
 Yet, though mocking every motion,
 'Tis but shadows that you fear, —
 Only shadows — airy shadows.

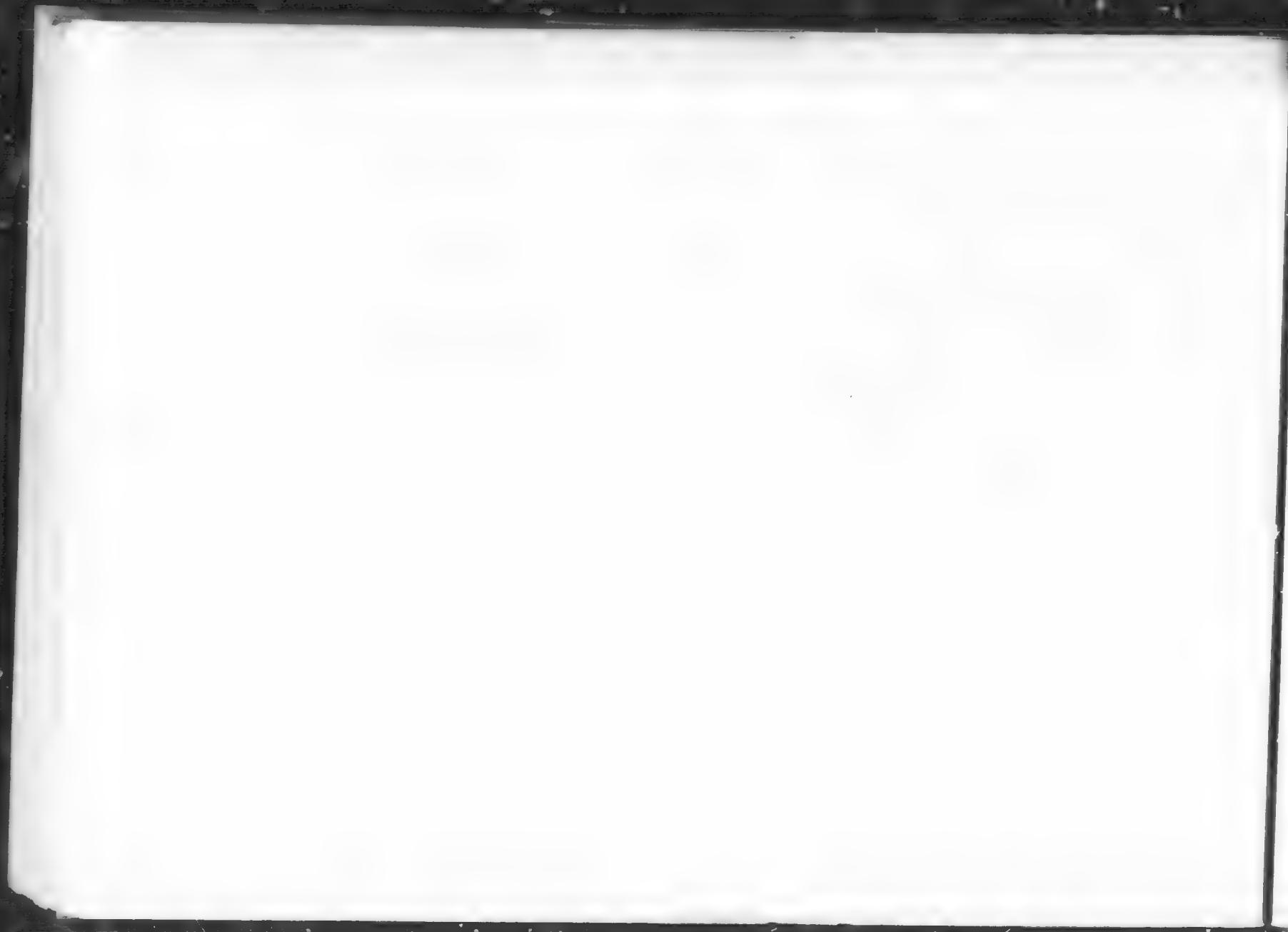
Ah! you think of those departed,
 Those who glided to and fro
 Lightly through this very chamber,
 On whose walls the fire did throw
 Dancing shadows — passing shadows.

But as years roll'd on they left us
 Empty-hearted at the door;
 Then there came to fill their places
 Round our hearth forevermore,
 Only shadows, shadows, shadows, —
 Mocking shadows evermore!

UNCLE BEN.

THE quaint old town, I remember it well, —
 With the street along the strand,
 The windy bay, the rocks and the reefs,
 The cliffs, and the gray-blue sand!
 And oft in my lonely hours, they come
 Like the scenes of a dream again, —
 The rocks and the reefs and the windy bay,
 And the yarns of Uncle Ben.
 Ah, well I remember the brave old salt,
 And his legends weird and wild,
 That many a long dark winter night,
 The weary hours beguiled!

Some said Uncle Ben was cross'd in love,
 And some, he was crazed with fright,
 And only a dream, his favorite yarn
 Of the Angel-girl of the Light.
 But whilst the sea-wind sobb'd and sigh'd,
 And the big drops plash'd the pane,
 With the old man there in his great arm-chair,
 What reck'd we wind or rain!



"Oh, hear Mad Moll how she roars, Uncle Ben!
 And the hollow winds, how they moan!"
 "'Tis a dirty night; but a cat's-paw this,
 My lads, to the storms I have known!"
 "Was it worse than this, Uncle Ben," we ask,
 "The night that the Belle was lost?"
 "Ay! ten times worse! with as wild a sea
 As ever a good ship cross'd. —
 Oh, human lives they come and go,
 Like the lights," quoth Uncle Ben,
 "That sparkle awhile on the crest of the wave,
 And then fade out again!"

And now the old man lights his pipe,
 And looks with a far-off gaze,
 While the spectre forms of the memory float
 Through time's obscuring haze.
 "The east wind blew, the white foam flew,
 And never a star was seen;
 The land lay off our starboard bows,
 And the breakers roar'd between.
 With scarce a rag to the bending spars,
 The good ship held her way,
 Till we caught a sight of the welcome light
 Above the feathery spray.

"And so we drifted near and near,
 Each rock and reef we pass'd,
 Till high on a bank of shifting sand,
 The poor Belle plunged at last.
 And then the waves they leapt and hiss'd
 And madly raved and tore,
 Till naught but a mass of tangled wreck
 Went tumbling on to the shore;
 And over my face a black cloud fell,
 And I saw and knew no more.

"I knew no more than a babe unborn, —
 No more than a stock or a stone;
 And how I got to the land, my lads,
 To the Lord is only known;
 But when I came to myself again,
 An angel bent o'er me, —
 In her hand so white she held the light
 That glitter'd out on the sea.
 Her golden locks by the winds were toss'd, —
 They brush'd my cold wet brow;
 And she held my hand; but oh, that face!
 Dear Lord, I see it now! . . .
 Well, I was a free young sailor then,
 Of naught in the world afraid;



I work'd my way, I got my pay,
 Nor cared for man nor maid.
 But when I saw that innocent face,
 I felt that I had a heart;
 And I said, 'Sweet angel-girl of the light,
 We never more shall part!'

" 'Thank God!' she said, and bent her head,
 And kiss'd me on the cheek,
 And my hand she press'd to her beating breast;
 But never a word did speak.
 And my fingers closed as if no more
 Could I let that soft hand go,
 That her blessed beam might ever gleam
 O'er all my days below!

"But human lives they come and pass
 Like the lights," quoth Uncle Ben,
 "That sparkle awhile on the crest of the wave,
 And then fade out again!
 Scarce twelve short moons had wax'd and waned,
 When her Father came one night,
 And said, 'Now, Ben, you must give me again
 The angel-girl of the light.'

"Ah, lads, but that was a thunder-bolt
 From out of a clear blue sky,
 With the ship at rest on the ocean's breast,
 Nor a thought of danger nigh!
 'Dear Lord!' I cried, 'I know she's good, —
 Too good for a man like me;
 But oh, we love with a faithful love,
 And none are so happy as we.
 Oh, carry her not away!' I said,
 'And leave me again to wreck;
 For angels enough there be aloft,
 To spare us a few on deck.'

"But 't was all no use! The black cloud fell
 O'er my face as it did before,
 And I heard the wild winds howl and moan,
 And the billows rave and roar;
 And when I came to myself again,
 I was all alone on the shore!
 For so she went to her home, and I
 Lay wreck'd again on the strand;
 Yet through life's spray, I can see the ray
 Of a light on the far-off land, —
 Of a constant light by day and night,
 And 't is held in my angel's hand!"



YEARNINGS.

COME, holy Life-giver, —
 Come quickly to me;
 All strength to deliver,
 All fullness forever,
 All gladness and riches and peace like a river,
 Are only in thee!

Came Love's fervent meeting,
 With arms that enfold
 Twain hearts that are beating
 One pæan, and cheating
 Old Time, as we fancy; but cold is the greeting
 Of lips that are cold!

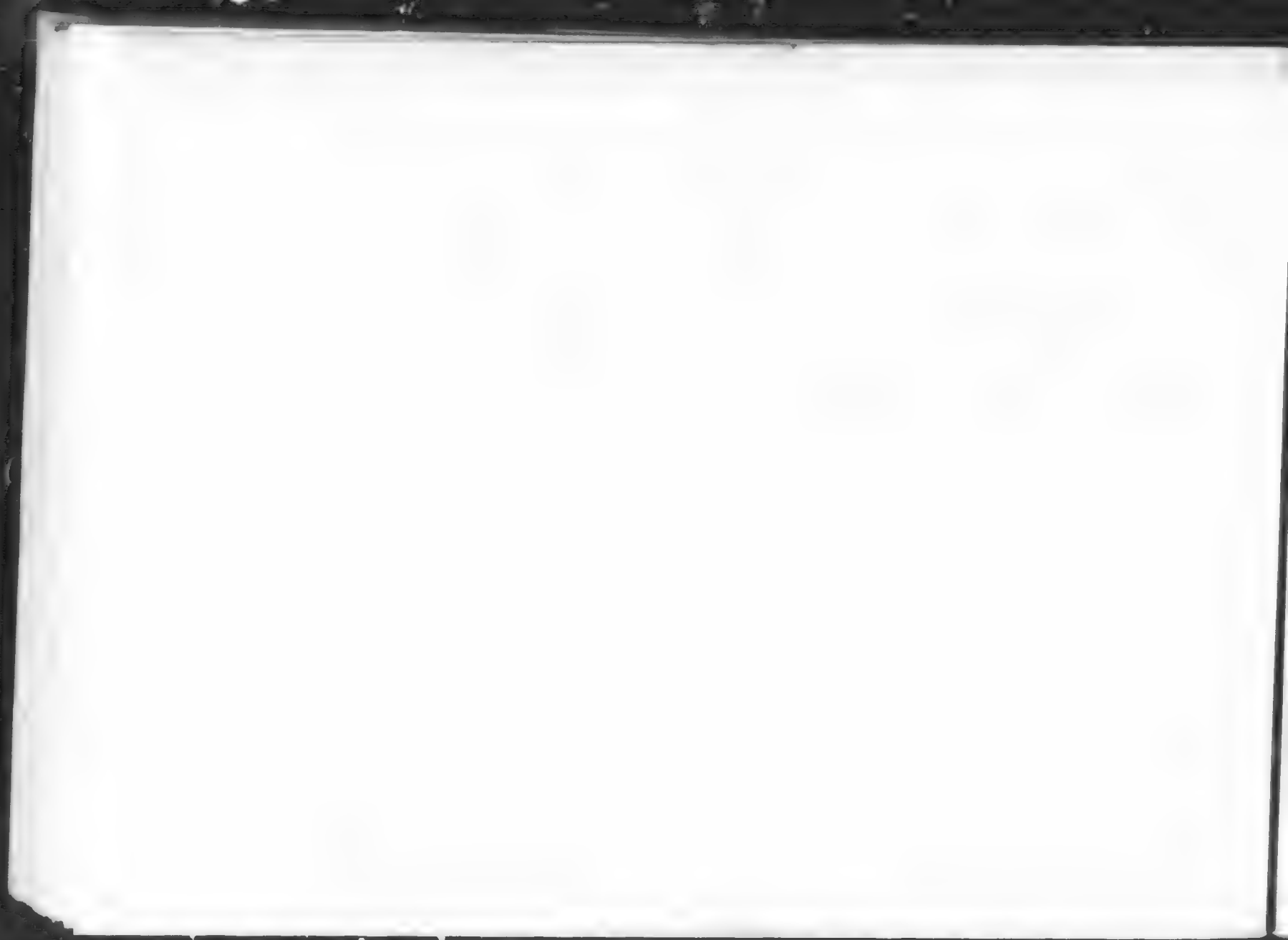
From dust, came the flower
 To gladden the way;
 Through sunshine and shower,
 The pride of the bower,
 And ever shall be. But, alas, for the hour!
 It faded away.

Then, welcome, Life-giver!
 All fullness and riches and peace like a river,
 Are only in thee.

THE CHRISTMAS BELLS.

Oh, hear the sweet bells as they ring,
 And welcome the glorious morn, —
 The day when our Saviour and King,
 The blessed Messiah was born!
 Behold in the zenith his star,
 How it brightens the heavens above!
 And princes perceive from afar,
 And come with their treasures of love.
 Then join every voice in the song
 The sweet bells of Christmas awake,
 Come join in the jubilant throng
 The journey to Bethlehem take!

Bring gold, for a Monarch is born,
 In David and Solomon's line;
 Bring myrrh, for the sorrow and scorn;
 Bring incense, for he is divine.
 He comes, and the shadows depart
 From all the dark regions around;
 He comes, and rejoicing each heart
 With songs of salvation resound!



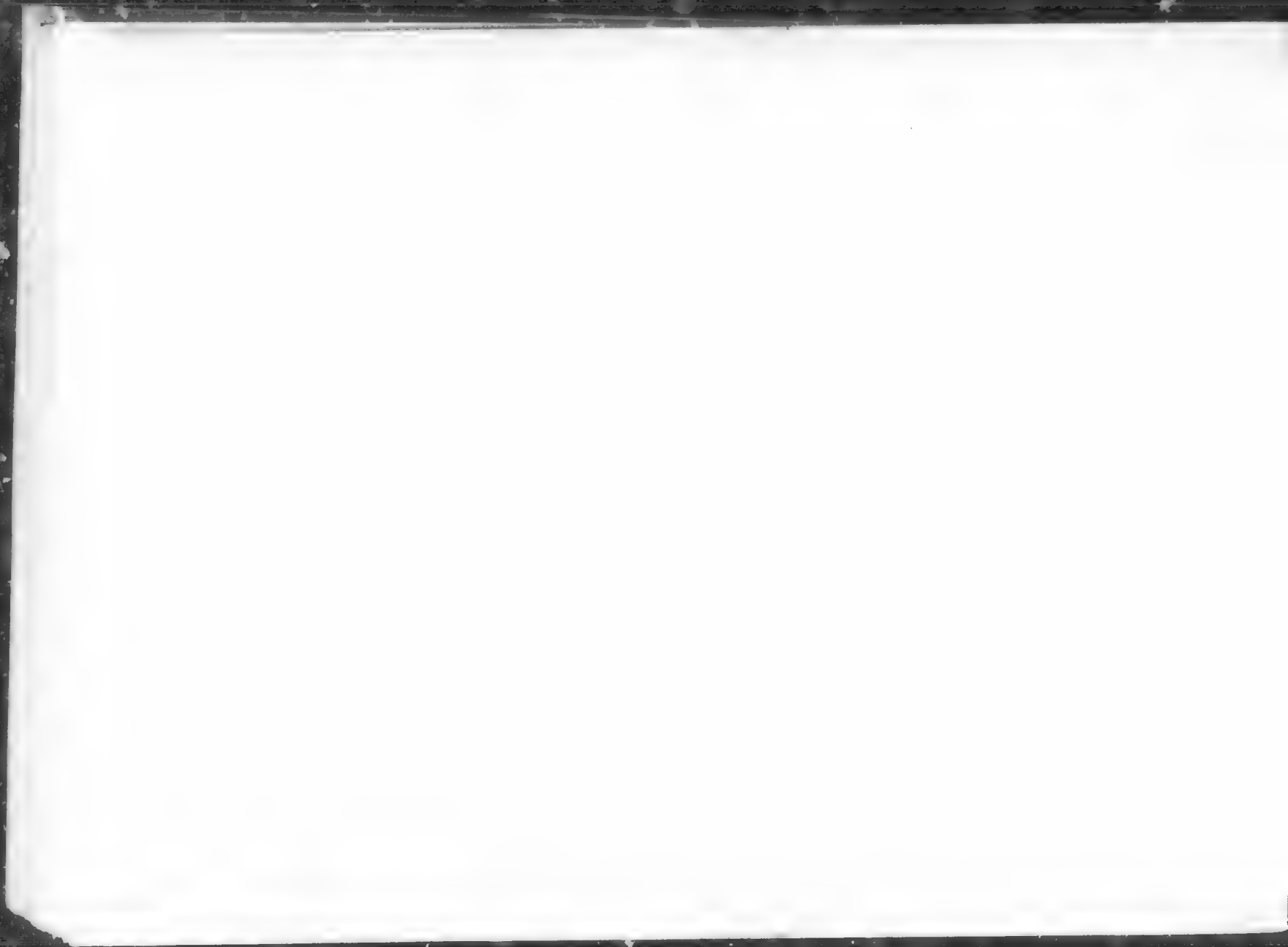
No longer in doubt and distress
 Poor wayfarers stand on the shore ;
 Now Jeau is waiting to bless,
 And lead them the dark river o'er.
 Bring incense of worship, bring gold, —
 All gifts at his feet shall we lay ;
 The Saviour by prophets foretold, —
 Jehovah is with us to-day.

THE CHILD JESUS.

"YEA, daughter," said the Rabbi, casting off
 His gabardine, "the Council hath sat late ;
 But not without good cause ; for, sooth to tell,
 We had this day a marvellous visitant,
 Which, if I thought as do the gentile Greeks
 And Romans, I should dare believe a god, —
 Though in the form and semblance of a child !
 For as we probed the deep and hidden things, —
 The awful mysteries of our Holy Writ, —
 There came a boy with large and luminous eyes,
 Which he did fix upon us with a gaze
 So steadfast and so searching, that we saw

Naught save those eyes ; whereon his lips he oped
 And, in a silvery voice, such questions ask'd
 As never man, much less a child, conceived ;
 And when we fail'd to answer him, he smiled
 A sad, sweet smile, and answer'd them himself,
 And in such wise as fill'd us with amaze !
 For in our doctrine, prophecy, and law,
 He seem'd exact, — and yet a twelve-year boy !
 If such, indeed, he was. So sped the time,
 Till came a woman, pushing through the midst,
 With pallid cheek, tear-stain'd, dishevell'd locks,
 And eyes so like the child's that all could see
 She was his mother, e'en before she press'd
 Her trembling lips upon his silky hair,
 Whisp'ring, 'Son, why hast thou thus dealt with
 us ?

Lo, thy father and myself have sought thee
 Sorrowing.' But he said, 'How is it that
 Ye sought me ? Wist ye not that I must be
 About my father's business ?' Yet she seem'd
 To understand him not ; but silently
 Conducted him away, — and we were mute !
 Mark me, Rebecca, if this be a child
 Of mortal mould, — the which perplexeth me, —
 The world will surely hear of him some day."



GRETCHEN.

"GRETCHEN, Gretchen! run, my daughter!
A wounded Frenchman's down by the wall!"

"Mother, but why should I run to a Frenchman,
Save to give him a pistol-ball?"

"Gretchen, Gretchen! think of thy brother,
Following Fritz so far away!"

"Mother, I hope he's making the Frenchmen
Dance to the roll of his drum to-day!"

"Ah! but, Gret, suppose he is fainting—
Famishing, down by a Frenchman's wall!"

"Mother, O Mother! and hear'st thou nobody
Feebly, 'Gretchen! Gretchen!' call?"

"No, my child; but I hear the breezes
Murmuring round our empty hall."

"Mother, I'll run to the wounded Frenchman,
Fainting—famishing, down by the wall!"

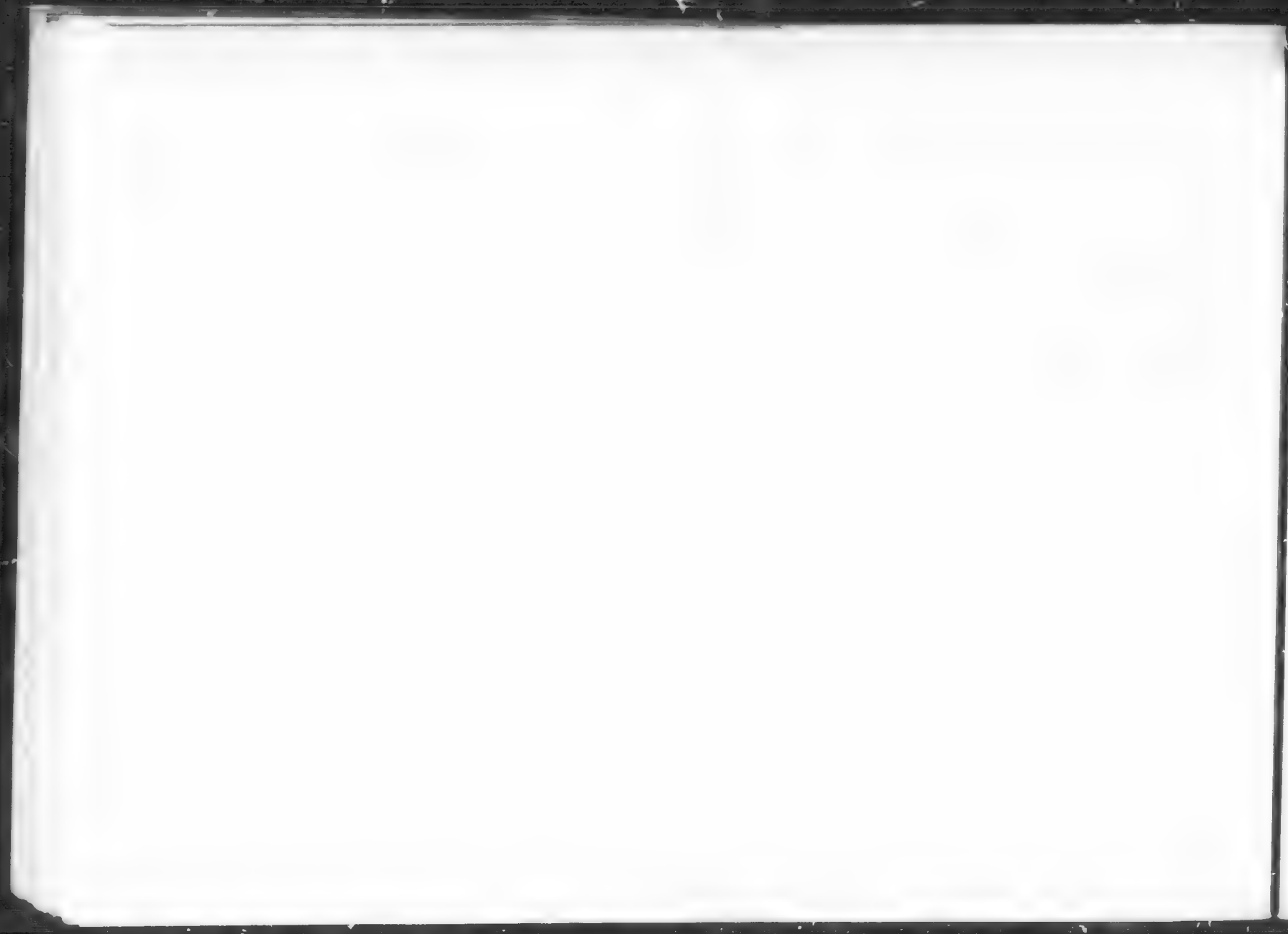
DECEIVED.

With honeyed words you won her heart,
And led her from her father's hall,
And bade her hope for more than all
The love from which she wept to part.

And she believed your promise true,
And so released her last embrace
Of childhood's home, and turn'd her face
To other scenes along with you.

"A right good man have we allied:
A man of prudence and of mind,"
The father said. "I trust she'll find
A constant heart," the mother sigh'd.

And soon again the hearth grew bright,
And every doubt was lull'd to rest;
And blest because their child was blest,
The good old pair rejoiced that night.



But scarce a year hath pass'd since then,
 And Mary sits alone in tears, —
 Alone, alone! and only hears
 The steeples chime and chime again,
 The rain descend, the night-winds moan;
 But you, amid the reeling throng,
 Where flows the wine and swells the song,
 Heed not that Mary sits alone!

ROSES AND THORNS.

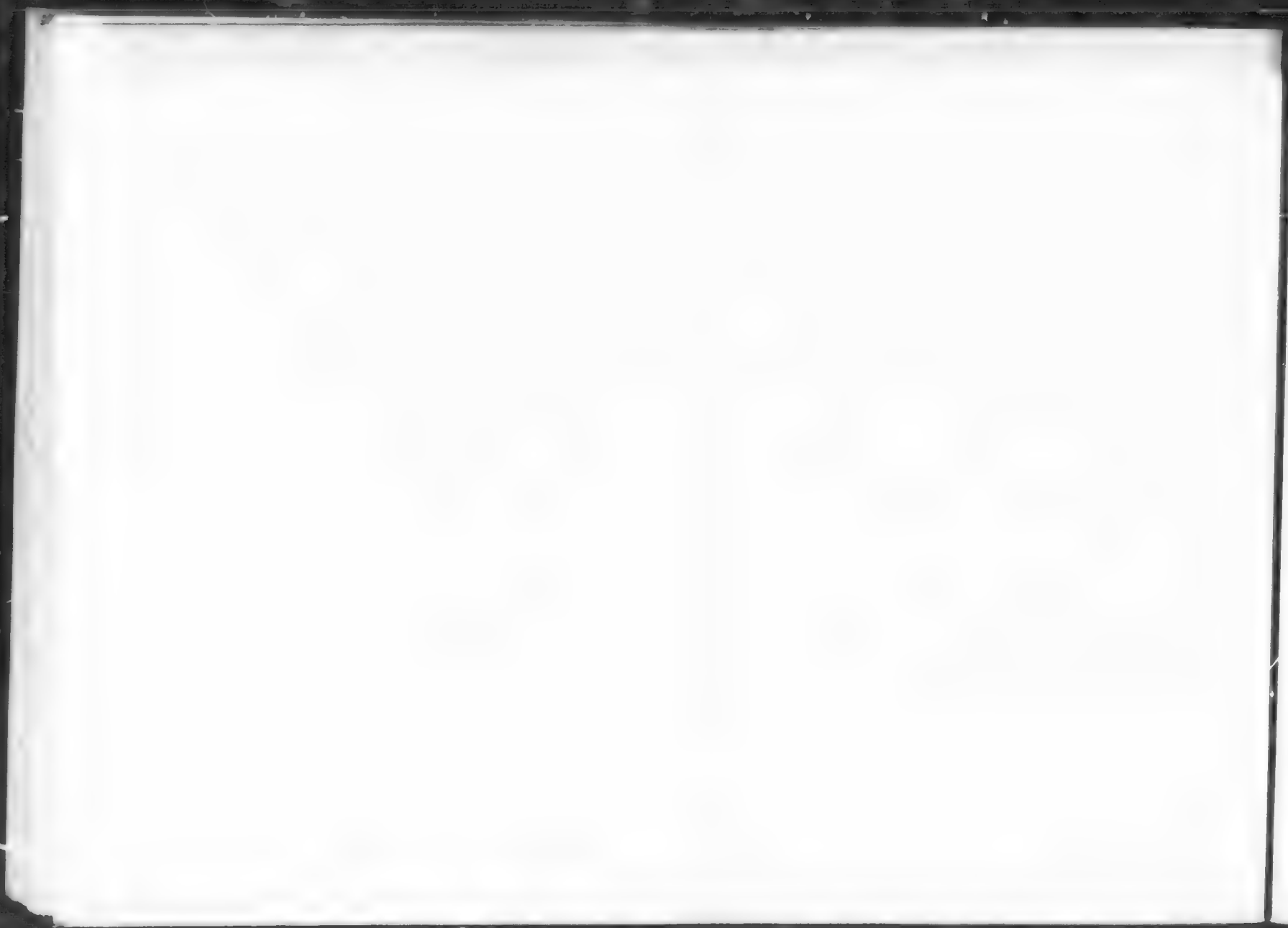
I GATHER'D the roses:
 My fingers were torn;
 Full early they faded,
 And left me to mourn.
 Yet others are blooming
 As fresh as the morn;
 I sigh for their beauty,
 But think of the thorn!

THE PRESS.

WHEN dangers darken o'er the land,
 And gathering tempests rise;
 When lurid lightnings glance and gleam
 Along the murky skies, —
 What trusty guardian seek we then
 To shield us from distress,
 And 'neath its shelter feel secure?
 The Press, my friends, the Press!

When rulers fail their faith to keep,
 And use their power for ill;
 And in the sacred name of Right,
 Their selfish ends fulfil;
 When injured Justice lifts her head,
 And dares to ask redress,
 Who pleads her cause with clarion voice?
 The Press, my friends, the Press!

To keep the boon our fathers gave,
 For which they fought and died, —



The boon of Freedom, — bright and fair, —
 (A nation's dearest pride!)
 What power beneath the arm of God,
 Do Freedom's sons possess,
 That holds the tyrant in its grasp?
 The Press, my friends, the Press!

The Press, my friends, the Press, — it speaks
 The burden of our souls!
 If gay, it laughs; perplex'd, it guides;
 Or vex'd, it thunder rolls!
 Then should we guard it pure and free,
 That Heaven may ever bless
 Our champion, advocate, and guide, —
 The Press, my friends, the Press!

EMPEROR LEAD.

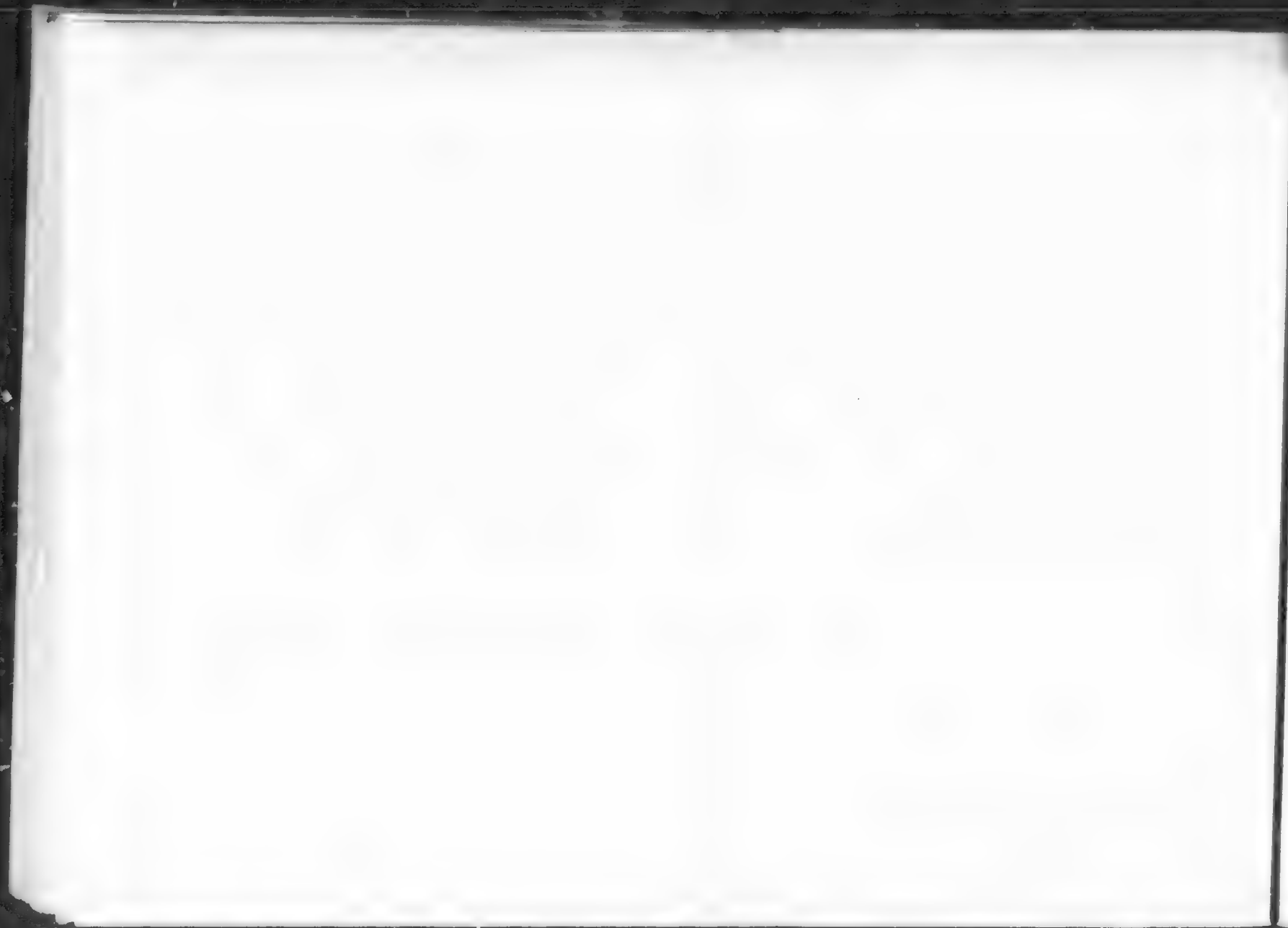
LET Moneybags boast of his silver and gold,
 Whose lustre so long has been shed
 On the face of mankind; but where can you find
 A metal so mighty as Lead?

Not alone on the field of red slaughter, we see,
 By the numbers of wounded and dead,
 That steel is in vain in the terrible rain, —
 In the fearful tornado of Lead, —

Not there is the might of its majesty shown,
 Whate'er may be chanted or said;
 No; 't is not in strife, but in everyday life,
 We behold the dominion of Lead!

Not in death-dealing balls is the metal supreme;
 Not in blood should its record be read;
 But over the world is its banner unfurled, —
 'T is Type makes a monarch of Lead!

The king and the bishop bow down at his throne,
 And are forced to acknowledge him head;
 The great and the small, rich and poor, one and
 all,
 Are the subjects of Emperor Lead!



TO A REJECTED POEM.

WHAT! here again, thou worse than Noah's dove,
That bringest nothing green back, e'er so small,
To this poor ark that scarce can keep above
The whelming waves or weather out the squall!

Thou luckless waif, will no one take thee in?
Does every magazine deny thee rest?
Hast thou no favor and no art to win
Regard from any editorial breast?

Ah, little do they know the anxious pain
Thy hapless parent suffer'd at thy birth!
The brilliant hopes he foster'd—all in vain!—
Of wealth and fame contingent on thy worth!

Alas! they tell me thou art thin and tame
And weak and rickety upon thy shanks;
Not in these very words; but, all the same,
They mean it when they say "Declined with
thanks."

Or all the diseases that ever were known
Since Noah's disastrous days,
The strangest that yet has afflicted mankind
Is the present keramikal kraze!

Ke-ram-i-kal:

You know; the keramikal kraze.

You may spell it ceramikal craze, if you choose
To follow illiterate ways;

But modern Kulture demands that it should
Be spell-ed keramikal kraze, —

Ke-ram-i-kal:

That 's it; the keramikal kraze.

Whoever is kaught with this kurious komplaint,
Very soon all the symptoms betrays;
And every old pitcher and pot in the house
With birds, bugs, and Japanese blaze!

Ke-ram-i-kal;

For such is keramikal kraze.

By-and-by, when this 'odd epidemic is o'er,
The ash-man will stand in amaze,
To find every barrel so full of "ould mugs," —
The remains of keramikal kraze!

Ke-ram-i-kal;

Then adieu to Keramikal Kraze!



I STOOD one day beside a wither'd hag, —
 A wretched, wrinkled, ragged, dusty crone, —
 Who, from an ash-heap, tried to fill her bag,
 With many a grunt and many a weary groan.
 Said I to her, "What are you doing here?"
 Whereat she cast a sharp, keen glance at me,
 And with a grin that stretch'd from ear to ear,
 Made answer, "Pickin' cinders, don't 'ee see?"
 "What for?" I ask'd. "What for! Why, what
 d'ee think?"
 To burn, of course, to burn: what else?" she
 said;
 "To thaw my bones, and warm my drop o' drink,
 To soak my frozen crust o' mouldy bread!
 "Humph! axin' me what for, an' I so cold,
 An' narry precious tooth around my jaws!
 He'll know hisself, if he grows poor an' old, —
 Which God forbid!" she moan'd with lifted
 claws.
 "Oh, poor unfriended creature!" I began;
 "Why longer strive to bear the life you do?
 Just die at once." When back she flash'd,
 "Young man,
 I've just as good a right to live as you!"

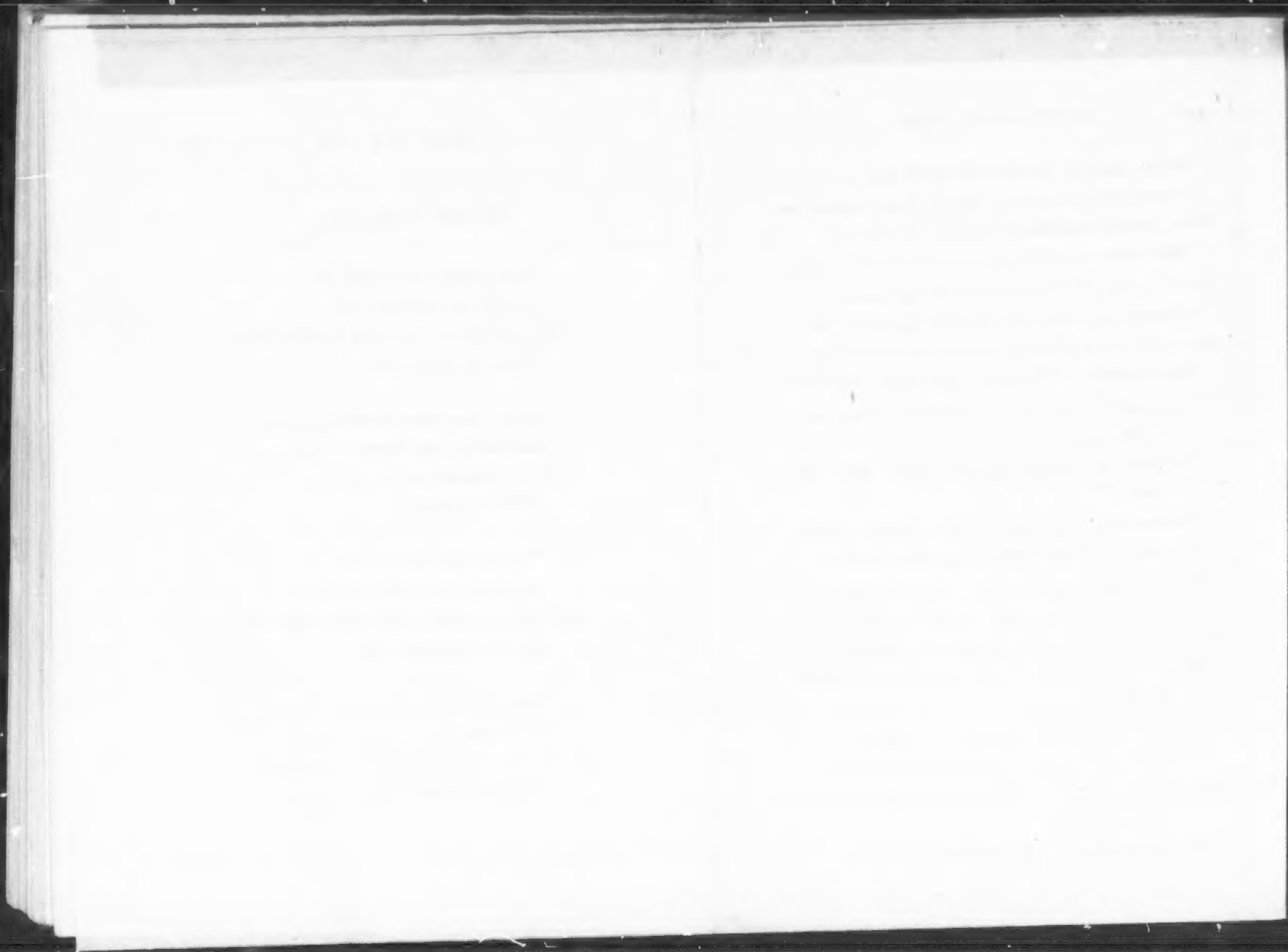
HEART AND SOUL.

POOR Heart, so lonely now,
 Within thy prison-wall,
 Thou may'st not, with the winged Soul,
 Obey the spirit-call.

Nay; thou must throb and ache,
 And wring the bloody sweat,
 And toil incessant at thy post,
 Unliberated yet.

'Tis for the joyous Soul
 To mount the sapphire dome,
 And with the loved ones hold commune,
 In their eternal home.

Here on this narrow mound,
 Still must thou lie and bleed:
 Earth ever clings to kindred earth, —
 The Soul alone is freed.



MY HILLS.

HAVE your theatres and hails,
Have your shops and shows and balls, —
All within your city-walls;
Only let me have my hills, —
My lone and silent hills,
Where Nature, in my sight,
Pours ever out and fills
Her chalice with delight!
Whisp'ring all the while,
With a winsome smile,
Such promise in my ear,
As mortals seldom hear.
For here no chancel-rail,
No jealous screen or vail
Divides me from my God;
But, on this mossy sod,
With the blue dome above
And the green world below,
I see, I hear, I know,
I feel that God is Love!